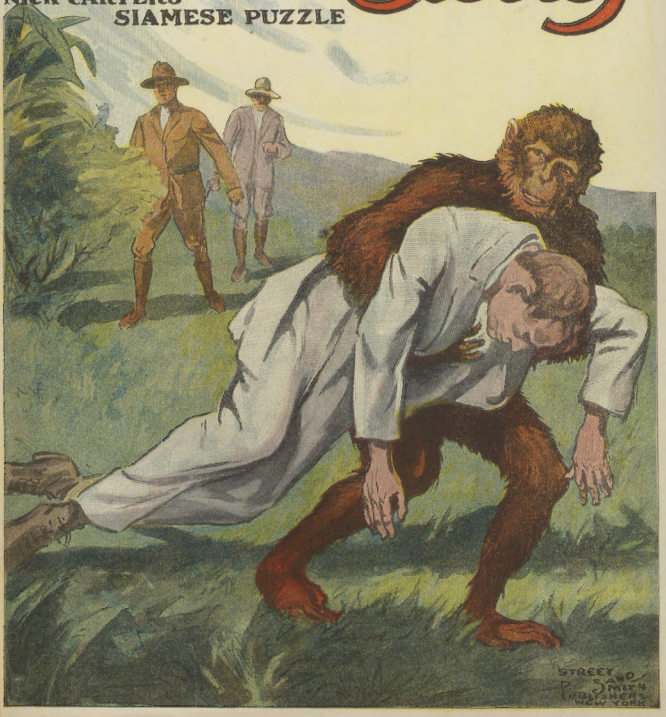
No. 127 FEB. 13, 1915 5 CENTS

Nick Carter Stories

FOUND IN THE JUNGLE
OR
NICK CARTER'S SIAMESE PUZZLE



NICK CARTER STORIES

Issued Weekly. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, *79-89 Seventh Ave., New York.*
Copyright, 1915, by STREET & SMITH. *O. G. Smith and G. C. Smith, Proprietors.*

Terms to NICK CARTER STORIES Mail Subscribers.
(Postage Free.)
Single Copies or Back Numbers, 5c. Each.

3 months..... 65c. One year $2.50
4 months..... 55c. 2 copies one year 4.00
6 months..... $1.25 1 copy two years..... 4.00

How to Send Money—By post-office or express money order, registered letter, bank check or draft, at our risk. At your own risk if sent by currency, coin, or postage stamps in ordinary letter.
Receipts—Receipt of your remittance is acknowledged by proper change of number on your label. If not correct you have not been properly credited, and should let us know at once.

No. 127. NEW YORK, February 13, 1915. **Price Five Cents.**

FOUND IN THE JUNGLE;

Or, NICK CARTER'S SIAMESE PUZZLE.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

SET ON THE TRACK.

"Then you will consent to remain in Siam a little longer, Mr. Carter?"

"If I undertake the work you want me to do, I shall probably have to stay several weeks, perhaps months."

"I will guarantee that it shall not be unprofitable to you."

"You mean in money?"

"Naturally. I could hardly have any other meaning. What will be your fee if you save these gems for my government?"

"That will depend on the time I spend. My charges are not low, as you are aware. If there were only money profit to be gained, however, I do not think I should care to do the work."

"No? Then, what——"

"I am rather curious to see something of the interior of this country. That is why I have given your proposition any consideration at all."

Nick Carter, the world-famous detective, was sitting outside the principal hotel in Bangkok, talking easily with one of the highest officials of the government of Siam, Señor Ribiero.

Ribiero was of Portuguese descent. His ancestors had been influential when Portugal exercised greater power in Siam than any other race. Señor Ribiero had considerable Siamese blood in his veins, but he bore his original family name, and was largely a European in his manners and point of view, even after centuries of acclimatization. He spoke fluent English.

The hotel was mainly of stone—as are most of the important buildings in the city—but, Siamese fashion, it was largely open to the outer air, with a great courtyard, in which were trees and plants in ornamental boxes and jars that would have done credit to a similar place in New York or Paris.

A gallery ran around one end of the courtyard, with steps at one end to the second story.

The manager of the hotel was an American.

Nick Carter, Señor Ribiero, and Chick Carter, the latter an assistant of the great detective, occupied roomy chairs, with rush seats, and, as they leaned back against the portico, their general appearance was singularly like that of guests of an American hotel taking the evening air in some Middle West town.

Nick Carter was smoking one of his own cigars, of which he always carried a supply, wherever he might be. Señor Ribiero was enjoying a cigarette that he had made himself. Chick seldom smoked. He was content now to enjoy the beauty of the tropical night, with its mellow moon glow, its myriad of stars, melting dreamily through the mild air, the perpetual hum of insects, the cries of night birds and strange animals in the neighboring jungles, and the intermittent twang of native music floating across the wide river.

Bangkok has been called "the Venice of the East," because so many of its thoroughfares are the canals that intersect it, and because the broad River Meinam washes its foundations. Some persons insist that it is even more beautiful than the ancient city on the Adriatic.

Chick was not troubling to compare the two places just then, although he was familiar enough with the Venice of Italy to have done so if he had chosen.

"I hope you'll persuade the chief to do what you want him to do, Señor Ribiero," he broke in suddenly. "I'd like to go up into the woods here, and——"

"I will have to decide about that," interrupted Nick. "Kindly allow me to decide. Our personal desires cannot weigh altogether in this matter. I have other reasons for accepting this commission of Señor Ribiero's on behalf of the Siamese government."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Carter," piped the ebullient Ribiero. "Will you come into my office in the palace? I can tell you then exactly what the king would like you to do."

"Very well," returned Nick nonchalantly.

The mention of the king had not disturbed the great detective. In the course of his profession he had met several kings, and even so great a personage as the ruler of Siam would not have awed him.

But the king was not seen. Señor Ribiero had merely used a form of words common with attendants upon royalty. His majesty would have nothing to do with the matter—at least, not directly.

"As I have already told you, there has been a bold theft from the great pagoda, Wat Chang," went on the minister. "Although the pagoda is well guarded by our priests—or bonzes, some rascals contrived to get in, and, undetected, stole jewels from the various images estimated as worth, in American money, more than a hundred thousand dollars."

"Wow!" ejaculated Chick. "There must have been a big bunch of those jewels, to be worth all that."

The Siamese minister indulged in a superior smile.

"Not many," he said. "It is not numbers that count in a case of this kind, but the size and magnificence of the gems."

"Are there any notable stones among those taken?" inquired Nick. "I mean any with a history?"

"No. If there had been, the case would not have been trusted to any one outside of our government," answered Señor Ribiero, with a decided shake of the head. "It is not that we think a Siamese official would have been any more likely to be successful than yourself, Mr. Carter," he quickly added, with a bow.

"That is of no consequence," said Nick, with a smile. "I understand something of royal politics. "What are the stones that have been taken, then?"

"We don't know exactly, because we are continually finding places where jewels have been removed from various sacred images. We know that a very large ruby is among the losses, besides other rubies not so large, with some emeralds, diamonds, and sapphires. But even that is not the main thing we desire you to take in hand."

"I did not suppose it was," remarked Nick quietly.

"You know that in many parts of Siam the ground yields great wealth—in minerals, as well as foods?"

The detective nodded, while Chick screwed up his eyes, as if he wondered what was coming.

"Among other products of our country are many precious stones. There are mines from which we get rubies, sapphires, amethysts, emeralds, and other gems. All the mines are owned by the government."

"I know that," put in Nick. "And some of the richest mines you have are in the Himalayan forests, north of Raheng."

"Why, I didn't think you knew——"

"The mines are in the midst of almost impenetrable jungles, and most of the men who work in them are convicts, although some free men are there, but mostly as overseers," went on Nick. "What about all this, Señor Ribiero?"

The minister was obviously taken aback at the extent of this American detective's knowledge. But he was too shrewd to let his emotions be seen more than he could help.

"There have been gems stolen from the mines amounting in value to not less than four million dollars, and they may run up into five millions."

"How was it done?" asked Nick Carter, seeming to take little account of the big figures.

"We think some white men have got up there and taken possession of a rich tract, which they have worked for their own profit with some of the convicts, who could be easily persuaded to do this, if they were paid enough."

"I don't see why they shouldn't," remarked Chick, who had been silent for some time. "If they are convicts, what do they care for the Siamese government?"

"Only this," rejoined Ribiero sternly: "The punishment for such a crime is death. And our laws provide for a great deal of suffering for the condemned before the executioner finally takes off his head with the sword. For instance, the criminal is partly disemboweled——"

"Never mind the details," interrupted Nick Carter. "We can imagine them. "Do you know who these white men are?"

"Only that one of them passed through Bangkok nearly half a year ago. He was here for several days. His name, he said, was Ralph Stanton, and he was understood to be an Englishman. He gave his profession as an engineer, and he wanted to make an arrangement with our government for building a bridge across the Meinam."

"Hardly required, I should think," remarked Nick.

"Of course not. Then he wanted to bridge some of the canals. He was a pleasant sort of man, and he seemed to have plenty of money. When he found he could not do any business with us, he said he was going up the country on an exploring and hunting expedition, and he hired a boat."

"Went up the river, eh?"

"Yes. But at Raheng he discharged the boatmen and they came back. That is all we knew of him until lately, when I heard that a white man who answers the description of Stanton has been seen near one of our principal mining tracts, in company with another white man, whose name I do not know."

"I understand. Are they near the mining tract of yours now?" asked Nick.

"That I can't tell you. They may have departed with some of their booty—or all of it, for anything I can say. But we know that, if our information is correct—and we do not doubt but that it is—they have been deliberately corrupting laborers up there, and have obtained possession of jewels to the value I have stated."

"Four or five million dollars?"

"Yes."

"That all?"

"No. As I have mentioned, a large number of gems were stolen from the sacred images in the great pagoda, Wat Chang. We are pretty sure it was Ralph Stanton who took them."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because he was a frequent visitor to the pagoda—and to others in Bangkok, for that matter—and the jewels were missed after he had gone."

"You said the pagoda is well guarded by the bonzes," put in Chick, who had been listening eagerly.

"Yes. But they couldn't be looking everywhere at once."

"You don't think these bonzes might have been bribed

to look another way while the thief moved about among the images?" asked Nick.

Señor Ribiero shook his head with emphatic indignation.

"Our priests would not descend to anything of that sort. Besides, it would be no profit to them to take a bribe. They could not spend money. Everything is given to them."

There was half an hour more of conversation, in the course of which Señor Ribiero answered a number of questions put to him by Nick, and also supplied the detective with a good map of the country along the river.

The Siamese, notwithstanding their isolated situation, geographically, are a well-informed people, and keep supplied with such conveniences as they need, including maps.

"Well, Chick," said Nick, to his assistant, as the two prepared to retire for the night in the really comfortable hotel, "we shall be in this part of the world longer than we expected. But I believe it will pay us."

"Well, considering that you are commissioned by the king himself, the pay ought to be fairly large," grunted Chick. "But I wish we were back in little old New York. That fellow, Grantley, whom we have been chasing clear across the Pacific and the Philippines, seems to have got away, doesn't he?"

Nick Carter looked at his assistant with a peculiar smile.

"Chick," he said. "Do you see any resemblance between the methods of this Ralph Stanton and our old friend, the jewel thief of New York, John Grantley?"

Chick drew a deep breath.

"Holy James!" he exclaimed. "Do you think it possible——"

"We shall find out when we get up the river into the jungle," answered Nick quietly. "At least, I hope so."

CHAPTER II.

WHEN ROGUES FALL OUT.

Two men lay on rough bunks in a gloomy hut, formed of saplings and roofed with palm branches, in a fever-ridden swamp far up the Meinam River.

Their bunks were of boughs, covered with coarse blankets, and the men themselves looked as rough as the couches on which they reclined, as they puffed cigarettes and talked over their affairs.

It was late in the afternoon. In another hour the sun would go down suddenly, as it generally does in the tropics, and shortly afterward the stars would come out, and there would be moonlight to cast its weird shadows, as well as its penetrating, ghostlike effulgence.

The men seemed to have been disputing, if not actually quarreling.

"It's no use talking about quitting just yet, Stanton," growled one of the men, who seemed of tremendous length, as he stretched out on his bunk, and whose features were haggard and gaunt, as if he had lived hard for a long time. "We are not ready to go, and I don't intend that all our scheme shall be ruined just because you want to get back to New York to spend money along the Great White Way."

He said these last three words in a contemptuous tone, as if the part of Broadway so designated had no charms for him.

The other man, who was stouter of build and much heavier of face than his companion, puffed viciously at his cigarette in silence for a minute.

He realized that the will of his comrade would have to prevail, unless something could be done which would take the stronger man by surprise.

"Look here, Asa Beveridge," he blurted out angrily, in company with a mouthful of cigarette smoke. "I figure that I have as much to say about this thing as you. More, in fact."

"How so?" questioned Beveridge, with a sharp movement which brought him to a sitting posture.

"How so?" repeated Stanton. "Just because I worked up this whole thing. That's how. All you've had to do is to slip over here, across Burmah, from Calcutta, to take your share of the profits——"

"And my full share of the work," interrupted Asa Beveridge. "But that's nothing. We both calculated to make a killing this time that would save either of us from ever worrying about our finances again. Well, we haven't done it yet. Therefore, we have to stick around for a while longer."

"Not for me. You can do as you like. I'm no hog. I've got mine, and I'm ready to pull out."

"Oh, you've got yours, have you?" sneered Beveridge. "That's interesting. How did you get it?"

"We'll divide. That's what I mean," was Stanton's reply. "If you don't want to come, I'll take my half and get out. I've had all I want of this fever hole. If we don't say good-by to it now, it may be everlastingly too late in a week or two."

"That's fool talk, Stanton!" snapped the other, as his haggard jaw set determinedly. "We've got things coming, and you want to let go just as the cards turn right for us. I want another two million dollars out of that mine before we quit, and I'm not sure that I would want to go even then."

"What's the use of being greedy?" demanded Stanton sullenly.

"In business the rule is to get all you can when the ball is rolling your way. You are gambler enough to know that it's bad play to quit when you have a winning streak."

"This isn't a gamble; it's business," growled Stanton.

"It's both gambling and business," corrected the other, leaning over toward his partner on his elbow. "We can't afford to go now."

"Why not?"

"Do you suppose we'll ever get another stone out of our mine if we leave it? Haven't we had to let these Siamese blackguards know all about our business——"

"Not all of it," interrupted Stanton, with a cunning grin.

"Quite enough to know what we are doing, and to give them a chance to beat us if we ever turn our backs."

"I don't think so. These fellows are convicts. Who would take their word?"

"Anybody, if it suited their purpose. Now, Stanton, you're a man of the world, and you've seen enough of it to know that the only person you can really trust is yourself."

"How about trusting your partner?" sneered Stanton. "Can't you trust a pal?"

"Not any farther than you can see him. You don't trust me. And I don't trust you."

"I'm glad you are so candid."

"It's my nature," returned the other coolly. "But, getting back to what we were talking about, I tell you we couldn't get this bunch of stopes out of the country without taking all kinds of precautions."

"That's all right. We'd take precautions, of course."

"With all that, we couldn't go now. The people down there in Bangkok are suspicious, and yet we'd have to go to Bangkok to get away—unless we traveled across country to Calcutta."

"Well, we could do that."

"Not if I know it. I've made that trip once. Never again for Asa Beveridge! What we'll have to do is to sneak quietly down the river as soon as we get the kind of boat we want—a sampan would be best."

"Well?"

"When we got to Bangkok we'd have to lie low until the authorities had got through investigating our sampan."

"Go on."

"When a ship came along that looked right, I would make some kind of bargain with the skipper to get us across the Gulf. We'd have to do a lot of traveling, and most likely use two or three ships. But we'd get to San Francisco at last."

"That listens good," declared Stanton. "Why not do it right away?"

"Because the time isn't ripe. That's why. Moreover, as I have just told you, I want some more stones out of that mine before I kick the dust and slime of this country off my brogans. You'll have to exercise a little patience, my dear friend. The time will come when you will thank me for what I am doing now."

"I have exercised all the patience I care to. You haven't given me any good reason why I shouldn't go—alone, if you won't go with me."

"I'll give you a reason," retorted Beveridge. "If you go away from this place, you'd be putting some of the stones from the mine on the market as soon as you got anywhere that it could be done."

"Not in Bangkok," snarled Stanton. "You know better than that."

"I did not say Bangkok. There's Hongkong, Tokyo, and other places where you might want to sell some for traveling expenses. Anyhow, I have no more to say, except that I won't agree to your going at this time."

Beveridge said this in a tone of finality, as he deliberately rolled another cigarette, using a leaf, instead of paper, for the wrapper.

"You won't agree?" Stanton blazed out. "Well, you'll have to. You can stay here and rot, if you like. I am going to take my half and go."

"Oh, you are?" mocked Beveridge. "We'll see about that. You'll do what I say, Stanton. If you don't, I've got men here who will obey me in everything—in everything, mind!"

"Well?"

"It would be the easiest thing in the world for me to put you to work at the actual labor in the mines. You would be one of the laborers, and that is where you would stay till I chose to release you."

"Oh, shut up with such baby talk as that!" roared Stanton. "Curse you! What right have you to say whether I shall or shall not leave? Haven't I done my share of the work and scheming, and haven't I always played straight? If I want to make my get-away now, and see how I can do it without a slip-up, what is it to do with you?"

"It has this much to do with me," rejoined Beveridge: "If you try to get through alone, you are going to be caught. If they landed you, they might find out that I'm here. That would mean they'd come after me, and I'd have all the trouble of holding them off—which I don't want. Now, don't say any more. You're spoiling my smoke."

Stanton looked at his partner for a few seconds, smoking slowly. At last he threw down the end of his cigarette, and, without a word, stalked out of the hut.

Beveridge chuckled in a low tone, and, lying flat upon his back, gazed thoughtfully up at the palm-leaf roof of the hut for a few minutes.

By that time he also had finished his cigarette. He got to his feet, thus revealing himself as more than six feet in height, and evincing, in every line of his lean body, the possession of leathery sinews, without superfluous flesh.

He was a powerful man—this Asa Beveridge, and in his haggard and unshaven face could be read stern determination to have his own way, regardless of the wishes of anybody else.

"So Stanton, as he calls himself now, wants to kick over the traces, eh? I'll have to trim him down, I'm afraid. The ass! As if he could dictate to me!"

Asa Beveridge shrugged his great square shoulders, and pushing aside a door made of long grass which guarded the one portal to the hut, he strode out into the tangled mass of shrubbery that overshadowed everything.

He noted the beaten path along which he knew his partner had departed, one taking him toward the nearest pit, from which, with the aid of their men, they had been digging out gems frequently enough to make the work worth while.

Beveridge broke down the bushes that were in his way, and soon found himself in a small clearing in the densest part of the jungle.

On the opposite side of this open space was a thick hedge of thorny shrubs. In the hedge was a black opening into the shrubbery, but not going through it entirely.

In the clearing the grass was trampled, as if a crowd of men had been busy at the task for a long time.

Beveridge smiled as he looked at the beaten-down grass. Then, peering into the dark hole, he distinguished two points of green light in the gloom.

"He's there, all right!" muttered Beveridge.

He gave vent to a low whistle.

CHAPTER III.

A TREACHEROUS STROKE.

While Beveridge's lips were still compressed in the whistle, a strang whimpering sounded from the hole, and a head and face that were not human, although they bore a grotesque resemblance to those of a man, were thrust out.

The head was followed by the long, hairy arms and awkwardly shaped body of a large, reddish ape.

"Hello, Sandow!" laughed the man, as he brought forth some stale biscuits, of the kind known as "hardtack," from a pocket. "Hungry, old chap?"

The great creature—he was about as large as the man,

and probably quite as strong—munched contentedly at the hardtack, showing, in many ways, his regard for the donor.

If Stanton could have seen Asa Beveridge just then, as he coolly rolled another cigarette, while the immense ape grinned and chattered over his foot, with affectionate eyes always on him, he would have known that this tall, lean man was naturally a leader, whose will was his chief law.

When Sandow—as Beveridge had named the ape—had finished his food, the man put him through a series of performances which would have delighted a circus or vaudeville audience. It seemed as if this great, ugly simian could do anything possible to a human being. Probably he did not understand the significance of his feats in a general way. But he seemed to do so, and that was sufficient.

"That's right, Sandow!" laughed Beveridge, when he had finished his amusement. "You are very good. I've seen any number of trained monkeys on the stage that are not as good as you. If ever I get right down on my uppers I'll try to book you over the 'Big Time' in vaudeville, and I'd bet a dollar we'll make good."

It was nearly dark. But Beveridge seemed to know where he was so well that this did not trouble him. Besides, the moon would be out as soon as the sun had disappeared, and it would be a glorious moon, and such as is only seen to perfection in the tropics.

At a sign, Sandow swung himself into the branches of a giant tree, and, chattering a farewell, went off through the forest for a nocturnal ramble, from which he would not return till dawn.

Beveridge strode back to the hut and slipped on an old coat—more to protect himself from briers and tree limbs than for warmth—and went along the path that he surmised had been taken by Stanton.

"That fellow Stanton is a bonehead," he muttered, as he puffed away at another of his interminable cigarettes. "Not content with getting himself into danger, he wants to drag me with him. Well, I'm not going to let him do it. The whole situation is too ticklish for us to fool with it any more than we have to."

He walked on, smoking reflectively, for twenty yards or so. Then he took up the thread of his meditations again in audible tones:

"I wonder what Stanton's real name is. I can't help thinking I'd met him before we made the deal to work this scheme together. My impression of him is that he's as slippery as a greased eel. He'd sell me in a minute if he had the chance. Well, he won't get the chance. I'll keep an eye on him until I get out of this fever hole. When once I am clear of it, I don't care where he goes or what he does."

Asa Beveridge stopped and looked up at the star-lit sky. Then, as he thrust his two hands into his coat pockets, he muttered:

"He's been useful to me in a way. But I've done most of the hard work, and none of these fellows we have on our staff would have come with us but for me. They seem to doubt him, somehow. Not that I trust them, for that matter. They're the scum of the country, and I reckon almost any of them would murder us if they got a good opening. Well, there are millions of men in the world no better than these convicts, if you scratched below the surface."

Turning aside from the main pathway, Beveridge took a narrow trail, one that had been beaten through the grass, and which swung off almost at right angles. It led past the huts where the poor wretches lived, who worked in the mines.

These men were not only those in the employ of himself and Stanton. Some of them labored in the mines owned by the government, so that suspicion should not be aroused too strongly in the minds of the government agents who took down the river the wealth procured by the outcasts up in the jungle.

As Beveridge came near the first hut, he mumbled a low oath.

Standing near the door, his form clearly outlined in the moonlight, was Ralph Stanton.

He was talking to one of the most dangerous convicts in the district, a leader among his kind by reason of his domineering disposition, and because he was known to have killed several men before being sent into the wilderness as a life prisoner.

"What's he talking to Thongu about?" thought Beveridge. "It doesn't look right to me."

Boiling within, as he was, there was no indication of his anger as he strolled easily up to the men and said, in a calm tone:

"Hello, Stanton! You're up here, are you? Come along. I want to talk to you."

For a moment Stanton seemed inclined to refuse this invitation, which really was a command.

Thongu, the dark-skinned convict, looked into Beveridge's face with an insolent stare, as if he were ready for mutiny, provided Stanton should give him a sign.

Thongu did not have long to reflect on this, however. With a sudden shooting forth of his hard bony fist, Asa Beveridge sent the scowling convict flying backward into the bushes.

The fellow lay there without sense of motion.

Asa Beveridge struck a fearful blow when he put all, or even most of his strength behind his fist.

"Come on, Stanton!" he repeated, without looking at his partner.

Beveridge strode along the path toward the mine, and Stanton, after an uncertain pause, went after him, but kept several paces behind.

They left the main path after a while, falling into a side road that would take them to a mine which had been recently opened. Not so many persons had traversed this path as the other.

"Where are we going, Beveridge?" asked Stanton.

"Up to the mine," was the curt reply.

"What for?"

"To look at it."

"Oh!"

During this brief colloquy, Stanton had been fumbling at his belt. In it a long hunting knife reposed in its leather sheath.

Stealthily he drew out the weapon and grasped it with the point downward, ready for a murderous stroke.

Asa Beveridge strode on, calmly smoking, and unconscious of the treacherous move behind him.

Stanton knew, as well as did Beveridge, why they were going to the mine.

It was a long way from the huts. Once there, he could be taken to task for what looked like conspiracy with Thongu, and there would be no interference.

Stanton did not want to face the questioning that would be sure to come.

He was afraid Beveridge would wring the truth from him, which was, that he was trying to get Thongu to help him to get away from the wilderness before his masterful partner could stop him.

"I dare say he would think I was telling Thongu to kill him if he could not do any better," muttered Stanton, his dry lips moving quiveringly. "Well, that's true. What could he say about it. Anyway, I——'

Into his fat, sensual face had come a look of diabolical hate and cunning. The hand grasping his knife twitched, as if it were in a hurry to get into action.

The broad back of Beveridge was before him. It would require only a few silent steps to get within reach. Then, a swift blow with the heavy knife between the shoulder blades, and all the difficulty about his getting away would be over!"

"If I did that, I'd also get all the stones, instead of half of them," he mused. "Besides, when it comes to division, he'll try to take all the biggest for himself, and, especially, that large ruby that I've set my heart on. No, it doesn't seem to me that I can do anything but wipe him out."

There is little doubt that Asa Beveridge saved his life just then by turning suddenly and speaking to his companion.

"Look here, Stanton," he began. "Don't you know you're making a fool of yourself by trying to engineer a deal with any of those blackguards who are working for us?"

"What deal do you mean?" demanded Stanton loweringly.

"Don't pretend you don't know what I mean," snapped Beveridge. "I can read without magnifying glasses. You want to get Thongu to help you, and——"

He stopped to roll another cigarette. In doing this, he turned his face from the sly, murderous rascal who had been gradually stealing nearer.

It was a tactical mistake, and Beverly saw it instantly.

"Ah, you cur!" he gasped, as he threw up his arm.

He was too late.

Stanton had been watching his chance.

Finding his partner was temporarily off his guard, encumbered with his cigarette, he suddenly leaped forward and drove the heavy knife, with all his strength, between Asa Beveridge's shoulders.

"You—infernal—coward!" gasped the stricken man.

That was all. His senses left him, and he fell in a heap on the tangled grass, while a great stain slowly spread over the back of his ragged coat.

CHAPTER IV.

NICK FINDS AN UNEXPECTED JOB.

"Did you hear that, Chick?"

"It was like a man speaking—or shouting!"

"You mean, like a man trying to shout! That was the way it came to me. Hurry!"

Nick Carter and Chick had been traveling on foot for twelve hours after leaving their boat on the Meinam to strike across country to the place where the government mines were situated.

Señor Ribiero had told them that the illegitimate mines that were worked by the men he suspected, would surely be near those of the government, so that they could take advantage of what might be a vein of the gems through that district.

Nick had followed trails in the Southwest many a time in the old days, when the Indians were troublesome, and it was not difficult for him to find marks of people's movements in this almost impenetrable jungle.

He had come without deviating at all, to speak of, straight to this district where native convicts and wastrels were at work ,and where they daily brought forth from the earth wealth enough to have ransomed them from almost any kind of slavery, if the gems had been their own.

When Nick Carter heard the sound of a man shouting; he and Chick were some distance from the spot where Beveridge had just received what looked like his death-blow.

The stillness of the jungle helped the detective to catch the gasping cry of Beveridge as he fell to the ground, with Ralph Stanton's knife between his shoulders.

In another half hour or so the night sounds of the wilderness would burst forth, and then it would not have been so easy to distinguish a human cry. As it was, the voice of the wounded man came with remarkable distinctness.

"Come on, Chick!" cried Nick, as he began to beat his way through the jungle.

Chick followed, but protesting all the time.

"Chief!"

"Well?"

"Wait a moment?"

"What for?"

"Just think what you're doing," begged Chick. "You don't know what you are running into. Don't go so fast!"

"I've got to go fast, or I couldn't get through this tangle," replied Nick, with his customary coolness. "What are you afraid of, Chick?"

That word "afraid" settled it. The detective knew it would. The bare idea of charging Chick with being afraid of anything was enough to make that young man brave anything this earth could send against him.

"I'm not afraid, chief," he protested pathetically. "You ought to know that. At least, I'm not afraid for myself."

Nick could not stand that. He felt that he had been unnecessarily cruel to his faithful lieutenant.

Stopping short, he thrust out his hand remorsefully.

"Of course you're not afraid, Chick," he said. "I know that. Shake hands and forget what I said."

Chick was only too glad to shake the hand of the chief he loved and respected more than any one else on earth. But he was still of the opinion that Nick should not go ahead so impetuously.

"You can't see what's ahead," he protested. "You might find yourself in a trap before you know it."

Nick stopped and looked at his assistant with a smile as he shook his head slowly.

"I don't know but what you are right, Chick. We are in an enemy's country, and there might be something laying for us. At the same time, that shout sounded like a man in pain. Either that or he was fighting with the odds against him."

"All right. We'll help him!" returned Chick. "But we don't need to rush as if we were going to a fire in a gasoline factory."

"It was a white man's voice, too," remarked Nick, half to himself. "What white men are there up here, I should like to know, except——"

"The fellows we are after," supplied Chick. "That's what occurs to me. So you see, caution is a good thing all around."

They pushed their way among the tangled undergrowth more slowly than at first, and with scarcely any noise. Chick had also had experience in trailing, and he could go through a wood silently, almost as well as his chief.

"Look out, chief!" warned Chick.

"Don't talk!" was all Nick said.

He had seen that they were on the edge of a small clearing, and he realized that most likely the person who had uttered the shout was close to them.

Nick was about to break through into the open, when he drew back with an inaudible gasp of horror. At the same time he placed a hand on Chick's arm to prevent his going forward.

Lying on his face, with arms stretched out, and feet thrust crookedly away from him, was a man who seemed to be dead. Certainly he was unconscious.

Above him, its hideous head just visible against the heavy branch of a tree, was a boa constrictor.

The baleful eyes were fixed on the quiet figure on the ground, and the forked tongue flashed in and out like lightning.

It was not possible to see how long the monster was. But the girth of its body, wherever visible, suggested that it must be not less than twenty-five feet.

For a moment Nick Carter hardly knew what to do.

It was inconceivable that he would permit this man to be killed without trying to save him. On the other hand, it would be necessary to proceed with the utmost caution or the boa would have two victims instead of one.

Nick drew his hunting knife, buttoned his coat, and, taking a long breath, prepared for battle.

Then he decided to draw his automatic pistol.

He would be at some disadvantage at first, because he could not see anything but the head of the snake, and it was moving from side to side so rapidly that, unless he could be absolutely sure of himself, it would not be safe to shoot.

Well did Nick know that if he missed the creature, or only wounded it slightly, its anger would be too great to resist in the first few seconds. The chances were that the man on the ground would be the first victim, with perhaps Nick himself, or his assistant, as the second.

It was not the danger to himself and Chick that he feared, however. They would have some chance of escaping. But the man lying on the ground, only a few feet below that menacing forked fang, could hardly be saved if the snake went into the fight in a businesslike way.

"I'll have to risk it," decided Nick aloud as he leveled his pistol at the waving head. "I believe I can get it."

"You don't think the shot will put the other man on his guard, eh?" suggested Chick.

Nick took more heed of this warning than his assistant had expected. He had been thinking the same thing, and it had had almost as much weight with him in holding back his fire as the possibility of his missing the head of the boa constrictor.

It was this momentary hesitation that gave another rescuer an opportunity.

Suddenly, from a high branch of the tree around which coiled the long folds of the boa constrictor's body there dropped a reddish-brown being, grotesquely in the semblance of a man.

The creature swung from limb to limb, easily and swiftly. Then, disregarding the head of the snake, alighted softly by the side of the prostrate man.

It was Sandow, the ape.

"Look, chief!" whispered Chick excitedly. "I didn't see that before. There's the handle of a knife sticking out of the man's back!"

It was true. When Ralph Stanton struck the murderous blow at his partner he had not stopped to withdraw his weapon, but had left it just where it was.

The ape seemed to reason that the knife had something to do with his master's condition—or perhaps he merely saw that it was an unusual thing. At all events he drew it out, and, with a snarl of anger, threw it aside.

His next act was to put his long arms around the insensible form of Asa Beveridge and lift him from the ground.

"What's he going to do?" muttered Chick.

The question was answered by the serpent. It had seen that its intended prey was in the arms of the ape, and perhaps supposed Sandow was going to take the man for his own meal.

Whatever may have been the ideas of the boa—if it had any—certain it is that it shot down its awful head with a dart so swift that the eye could not follow it. At the same time it unwound its many coils from the tree trunk and the branches that supported it.

As is well known, the boa constrictor, like the python and other snakes that overcome their prey by crushing them to death, does not use its fangs. Otherwise both the ape and the wounded man in his arms would have been mortally wounded at the first onslaught.

As it was, the creature twisted itself about both the ape and his master, and began to tighten its coils with the ruthlessness characteristic of its species.

The ape emitted a squeal of agony.

Nick Carter gave a sharp order.

"Come on, Chick! Pick up that knife! It's larger and heavier than your own."

Before his assistant could do as he was told, however, Carter had flung himself upon the tightened coils of the boa, and, with slash after slash, compelled it to loosen its hold.

Whether this would have sufficed to kill the monster is a question. Anyhow, Nick would take no chances.

He did not use his pistol, because he did not want to attract attention. But he brought his knife down on the neck of the snake, just behind the head, and after hacking at it for a few moments, had the satisfaction of seeing the great, writhing form relax and fall to the ground, a tangled heap, no longer to be feared.

CHAPTER V.

MISSED BY A DASH.

It had been a fierce fight while it lasted, and, not without its perils, for at one stage the boa constrictor had contrived to twine itself about both Nick Carter and his assistant.

This had been when it was wounded, and when it was

trying to use all its remaining strength to vanquish the two foes who had come against him so unexpectedly.

"We had a tight squeeze, hadn't we, chief?" grinned Chick.

"Yes, literally," replied Nick, with an appreciative chuckle. "But this isn't a time for joking. It looks to me as if we have got right to the heart of our case all at once."

"You believe this man is one we want?"

"Look at him and see what you think, Chick," was Nick Carter's response. "Ever seen him before?"

"Don't remember him."

"That's because he is unshaven and dirty, and in old clothes. Never mind. I recognize him."

The ape had the unconscious man in his arms and was dragging him into the bushes, as if to get him out of danger from these other men who had so suddenly appeared in the clearing.

"Doesn't seem to know that we are the fellows who saved the man," observed Chick. "What are we going to do?"

"Wait and see," was his chief's response.

The ape dragged Beveridge through the shrubbery, but only for a little way.

After going for perhaps ten yards, he got out to the open—to another path, wider than that where Nick and Chick had come upon the man with the knife in his back, with the head of the great serpent waving above.

Here Sandow picked Beveridge up in his strong arms, and, although the man's feet dragged on the ground, carried him swiftly along until they reached the hut where Beveridge and Stanton had had their argument a short time before.

Nick kept a few yards behind the ape, and Chick walked in the rear of his chief.

When Sandow got to the long grass that formed the door of the hut, he pushed his way in with the air of one who had been there before.

As the grass dropped behind him, Nick stepped behind the trunk of a big tree to reconnoiter, motioning to Chick to keep out of sight also.

"This is where this man lives," said Nick. "It is a question where the other fellow is. He may be here, too. We shall have to go in, but I don't think it will be safe to do it by the door."

The walls of the hut were only of saplings, and it would not be difficult to thrust them aside far enough to afford a means of ingress.

Nick let himself into the hut in this way. Finding himself in pitch darkness, he lay still and listened.

All he could make out for some time was the whimpering of the ape.

Sandow realized that something was wrong with his master, and in his powerlessness to revive the man was uttering cries of distress that were nearly enough human to convey piteous grief.

Nick Carter had been blessed with acute hearing, and he convinced himself soon that there was no other living creature in the hut besides the ape, the wounded man, and himself.

Cautiously he drew forth his pocket flash lamp and sent its white light across the cabin.

The glow fell full upon the white, gaunt, unshaven features of Asa Beveridge. Then it rested upon the huge, reddish-brown ape, which was squatting by the side of the man, rocking itself to and fro, as if in perplexity or deep distress, or both.

There was a lamp on a rude table, a barrel which might contain flour, and a bag of biscuits.

The whole hut suggested that the occupants had been living with the frugality which is usually unavoidable in the wilderness—even with the fruits that are to be had for the picking in the tropics.

Nick went to the opening by which he had entered the cabin and called softly:

"Chick! Come here!"

No answer.

"Chick!"

Still no response.

"What does this mean?" thought Nick. "He was here a few moments ago, when I came in."

The possibility of some evil having come to Chick outweighed any other consideration with the detective. He got to his feet outside, and stole around the cabin to the front.

"Chick!"

"All right, chief!"

The response was in a low tone and right in his ear. Chick stood up in front of him.

"What was the matter?" asked the detective. "What were you doing?"

"I saw two men coming along the trail. One was rather fat. He was in a white man's dress, although considerably frayed. The other looked like a native. He hadn't much of anything on, and what he had seemed to have been hung across him, instead of his being dressed in it."

"One of the convict workmen in the mines, I suppose," remarked Nick. "Well, what else?"

"They were talking, and I can tell you just what they said. First, the white man told the other fellow that——"

"Hush!" warned Nick. "Here they are."

Two men who answered the description just given by Chick appeared from the other side of the cabin, where they apparently had been reconnoitering.

Nick and his assistant were in the deep shadow. They moved back even farther as the two persons came to the front of the hut.

"John Grantley, as sure as I am here!" breathed Nick Carter, so far back in his throat that Chick could not hear him. "Just what I thought."

"I hear what you say," growled the native, addressing his companion as the two men passed the door of the hut. "But it will be dangerous for me to go to the river."

"Not at all," was the impatient contradiction. "You have a boat hidden where no one else can find it, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"And you mean to get down to Bangkok in it some time with all the stones you can get?"

"Yes. I have been here two years," replied the native. "It is enough. I want to go away. But when I do I must be rich. Thongu has had all he wants of doing without things."

"You will do what I ask, then?"

"For the rubies you promise—yes."

"That will do. I have not any now. But I can get them."

"When?"

"To-night. Come here in two hours. When the moon is above the big palm over there. Then you shall have the rubies, and you can lead me to the place where the boat is."

"But what will the big master say?"

"He will have nothing to do with it. I will attend to him. Beveridge is not in this," grunted Stanton.

"I go, then," said Thongu quietly. Then, with more animation, he pointed to Stanton's belt. "Where is the master's knife?"

The sheath was empty. Stanton put his hand to it hastily, as if to hide the absence of the knife. The convict laughed.

"I dropped the knife as I came along. It is in the bushes somewhere. I will get it later," explained Stanton lamely.

The Siamese rascal laughed and shrugged his shoulders so violently that the cloth hung across them nearly slipped off altogether.

"The sheath you wear has a button. When I saw it last, before you went with the big master, the button was tight in the hole, so that the knife could not drop out."

"What are you talking about?" broke out Stanton angrily. "What the dev——"

"I care not!" interrupted Thongu. "If you have killed him, what is it to me? He always made us work, and he cut us with a whip sometimes. I hope he is dead."

"Come back in two hours."

"I will."

With this laconic promise, Thongu pushed into the shrubbery and disappeared.

"I had forgotten about that knife," muttered Stanton. "But it doesn't matter. There won't be any more white men through here for twenty years after I get away. As for Beveridge, it is a good thing the boa did get him. That hides all trace of the other. Luck does come my way once in a while."

If Ralph Stanton—known to Nick Carter in former days in New York as John Grantley—had had any idea that he was giving his confidences into the very ear of the detective, he would have thought luck was not coming to him so surely, after all.

But he had no suspicion that any one overheard his soliloquy. In fact, he did not know that he had spoken aloud at all.

Pushing the grass door aside, he went into the hut and struck a match.

Hardly had he done so, when, as the ape jumped at him, he dropped the match to the floor, where it went out, and dashed through the grass door again—straight into Nick Carter.

CHAPTER VI.

NICK MAKES A BARGAIN.

Luck was with Stanton at that juncture, for he had come out so suddenly and unexpectedly that the detective had not time to grasp him before he had gone, with the ape, hot on his trail.

If Nick Carter had had any notion that the rascal would throw himself out of the hut in that precipitous way, he would have been ready to receive him.

"After him, Chick!"

Chick hardly needed this order from his chief. Although, in the half light of the moon, with the heavy shadows that always accompany the brightest illumination of this kind, he had only partly understood what had happened, he did see that somebody had come into collision with the detective and then had bounced away.

But Stanton had the advantage of knowing the locality, while Chick was an entire stranger.

Only a few yards had Chick gone, stumbling along a narrow pathway in the midst of the tangled shrubbery, when his foot caught in a straggling root and he lay at full length upon his face.

"Never mind, Chick," directed Nick, close by his side. "We can't get him now. But we'll have him in two hours when that Siamese fellow comes back. It is safe to say Stanton will try to keep his appointment—either in the hut or not far away. Let us look after the other man."

"It looks as if you would not have much trouble to land both these fellows now, doesn't it?" remarked Chick.

"You can't always tell," returned Nick. "You must not forget we have no direct evidence so far that these men have taken anything belonging to the government. It is all surmise up to date."

Chick did not reply. In his heart, however, he believed that the case would be closed that night, as soon as they had got hold of Stanton.

Nick entered the hut through the grass door this time. He was not afraid of running into some lurking enemy in the dark.

Nick had noticed a lamp on the rude table in the hut, and, putting Chick outside to intercept any curious person that might come along, he lighted the lamp and looked around him.

He was pleased to see that the wounded man had recovered consciousness and was looking at him steadily as he stood in the red glow of the lamp.

"Better?" asked Nick quietly.

"I've got my senses back, anyhow," was the gruff response of Asa Beveridge. "My back hurts like sin. What's happened?"

"Stabbed in the back," replied Nick shortly. "Know who did it?"

"Yes, blackguard calling himself Ralph Stanton."

"Why did he do it?"

"Argument."

"What about?"

"We're partners up here, working for the Siamese government. He wanted to go back. I objected. Don't want to work up here alone, the only white man among the natives. They are not good natives, either. Mostly convicts."

"I know," remarked the detective.

"I told him he'd have to stay here with me. He insisted he wouldn't. Then he got me—in the back."

There was so much truth in this ingenious tale that Nick Carter would have had some difficulty in sorting out the falsehoods in it, even if he had known all the circumstances.

"Lie down on your face!" ordered Nick briefly, without any comment on the story he had just heard. "I want to see how badly you're hurt."

Asa Beveridge recognized a will even stronger than his own, and obeyed without remonstrance. Nick stripped

off the coat and pulled up the shirt so that he could see the wound.

"Might have been worse!" was his quiet comment. "I'll tell you in a moment just what I do think of it."

He took from a pocket the case of surgical instruments he always carried, and also his drug case.

With a sterilized probe, he examined the gash in Beveridge's back, and smiled his satisfaction. The wound was not so deep as it looked. The knife had glanced and run along under the skin, but the injury was more painful than serious.

"You will be able to get along with this," remarked Nick. "Better keep still to-night, to give it a chance, and don't move too much for several days. After that you'll hardly know you've been stabbed."

"Won't I know it?" suddenly flamed out Beveridge. "I will never forget it. What's more, I'll be revenged for this in a way that will make the man who did it wish he'd never seen me."

The detective took little notice of this outburst. He'd heard fierce denunciations of this kind from wounded men before, and he knew that often, when their injuries had healed, they had somehow forgotten their threats to get even.

With dexterous fingers, Nick applied remedies to the wound and bound it up skillfully with surgical bandages that were part of his kit. Then, fastening a long strip of linen around the patient's chest so that it could not slip, he pulled the shirt into place, helped Beveridge on with his coat, and quietly returned his surgical and drug cases to his pocket.

No sooner had he done this than he gave Asa Beveridge a surprise. He was pointing an automatic pistol at the head of his late patient.

"What does this mean?" demanded Beveridge.

"You have several million dollars' worth of gems hidden somewhere—possibly in this hut," replied Nick unemotionally. "I want them."

Asa Beveridge laughed scornfully.

"You amuse me, my dear friend," he answered. "Who are you, anyhow?"

"You know who I am, Asa," was the reply. "Don't pretend ignorance. That won't help you."

For a few seconds Beveridge stared into the steel-gray eyes of the detective, alternating it with an occasional glance at the muzzle of the automatic which never shifted in Nick's firm hand.

"All right, Carter," he burst out at last. "If you know me, I don't see why I shouldn't confess that I knew you as soon as I came to myself a while ago. Although, how the deuce you came down here, or what for, is more than I can tell."

"I was in Bangkok on business," was the answer. "Then I was asked to come here and see that you restored between four and five million dollars' worth of gems you have taken illegitimately from the mines here."

"You'll have to prove that," laughed Beveridge. "I didn't know there were millions of dollars' worth of gems taken out of the ground in all Siam. It sounds like wild talk to me."

"That is the talk I listened to in Bangkok," replied Nick. "It came from a man high up in the government. He seemed to know what he was saying. Moreover, I have heard from other quarters that immense fortunes are taken out of the mines in this region."

"I haven't seen them," was the dogged assertion of Beveridge. "Even if I had I don't understand why you're pointing that popgun at me. What's the idea?"

Nick Carter smiled.

"You haven't forgotten that we have had some lively times together, have you, Beveridge? I took a chance with you once, in trusting to your honor. My experience then decided me always to trust only to a pistol with you thereafter, leaving your honor untouched. That's what this gun means. Keep your hands up while I see what is in your pockets. You are not so badly wounded but that you might not try some trick."

Beveridge shrugged his shoulders and slowly raised his hands. The expression on his face was half amusement and half boredom.

"I have a knife in one pocket and a pistol in another. That's all, my dear Carter. I had no intention of using either of them on you, I assure you. That would be most ungrateful, when you have so kindly done what you could to relieve my sufferings from that cowardly knife wound."

The detective took no heed of this. He found the knife and pistol, as Beveridge had said he would. Taking them out of their respective pockets, he transferred them to his own in a perfectly matter-of-fact way.

"Now, Beveridge! Will you show me where those stones are? They are cached somewhere about this hut, I believe. I'll find them, wherever they are. You may be sure of that. If you give them up quietly the chances are that you will get out of this without any more trouble."

"What do you mean?"

"Only that if I get the stones it would not be worth while to drag you down to Bangkok to be punished. If I don't get them, that's where you'll go, and to be dealt with according to Siamese law. The sentence in this country is something altogether different from what you would get in an American court, as you know."

Nick Carter had dropped his pistol when he disarmed Beveridge, and was standing quietly watching the other man, reading his countenance.

It did not take Nick long to see that Beveridge had made up his mind that the game was against him, and that his wise move would be to give up. It might chance that he would be able to turn the cards to his own advantage later.

"Well, which is it to be?" asked Nick.

"Listen!" replied Beveridge quietly, after a pause. "I'm willing to give up what I know because of two things."

"What are they?"

"One is that you have the drop on me, and now that I have had this cut my nerve doesn't seem quite as good as usual. The other is that I'm going to get back at the man who gave me this."

He jerked one thumb over his shoulder, as an indication that he meant the stab wound.

"Who is the man who did it?" asked Nick.

"He gives his name as Ralph Stanton," replied Beveridge sullenly.

"You don't think that is his real name, do you?"

"I don't suppose it is. But it is the only one I know him by."

"Ah, I seem to be better informed about him than you!" remarked the detective. "He will be here in two hours. At least, somewhere in the neighborhood."

"How do you know?" asked Beveridge quickly.

"That doesn't matter. He is to meet one of the native mine workers. His name is Thongu. I heard Stanton call him that."

"Thongu? That lying thief?" suddenly blurted out Beveridge. "They are all in it, then? I would give you all the information I could now, if it were only to beat Stanton. Come on!"

"Where to?"

"The place where the stones are," answered Beveridge. "But you'd better be ready for a scrap. There are nearly twenty of those convict rascals about where we have to go, and they are all liable to jump on us at once if they get an idea there is anything unusual going on."

"I know that," assented Nick Carter, with a quiet smile. "I have had dealings with convicts before in the course of my life. You can have your gun and pistol again. I think I can trust you."

"I know you can," said Beveridge, taking the weapons.

"Chick! Come with us," directed Nick as they got to the front of the hut, outside.

"I didn't know you had any one with you," remarked Beveridge. "Are there any more of you?"

"No."

"Well, I don't care if there are a dozen," returned Beveridge indifferently. "I am acting squarely with you. When I have shown you where these stones are I want to come back to the house and catch Stanton. That's all."

"I will help you," responded Nick quietly.

CHAPTER VII.

THE AIM OF RED CLANCY.

Asa Beveridge seemed to have recovered entirely from the effects of his wound, so far as his movements were concerned. He walked at a good, swift pace, pushing the branches of trees and shrubbery out of his way as he progressed with the careless ease that was characteristic of him at all times.

Suddenly he stopped in the deepest and darkest part of the jungle, where it seemed as if it would not be possible to proceed any farther without using an ax to clear the way.

"What's this?" asked Nick.

"The place where they are hidden. You see that tall palm tree ahead of us?"

"Yes. Are the stones hidden there?"

"Not exactly. But——"

Beveridge was not allowed to proceed any farther.

Four men jumped out from behind the trees around them, each armed with a heavy bludgeon.

Two of them fell upon Beveridge, while the other two attacked Nick.

It was all over with Beveridge in a second. One thump on his head and another on his shoulder sent him to the ground insensible.

Then the two men who had settled him turned to help their comrades with the detective.

Powerful and active as Nick Carter was, he could not prevail against four big ruffians armed with heavy clubs.

They held his arms so that he could not move. Then one of them gave him a vicious kick behind the knee and doubled his legs under him.

Three of the interesting strangers sat upon him.

"That'll do, boys!" grunted one big fellow, who seemed to be the leader. "You needn't hurt him more than you have to. We'll want him to be in pretty good shape to help us get the stuff we're after."

"What shall we do with the other one?" asked a fifth man, who came abruptly into view at this instant.

"Have you got him so that he can't make trouble?" asked the leader.

"Yes. We laid him out from behind with a crack on the coco. He'll have a headache when he wakes up, perhaps. But he isn't really hurt. Only, he will keep still for a while."

"Take him to the shanty where the two fellows have been living," was the order. "We'll all be back there in a little while."

As the fifth man disappeared to join a comrade who had not come forward, Nick managed to get a view of the big individual who was obviously the chief of the band of rascals. He tightened his teeth to keep back an exclamation of satisfaction.

The detective had recognized the fellow as a crook known as Red Clancy.

It had been several years since Nick had had a good look at Clancy because that estimable individual had been in retirement in prison at Joliet, Illinois.

But there could be no mistaking the coarse, brutal features and the brick-red hair.

Red Clancy's line was "strong-arm" work. He had served his term in Joliet for highway robbery, and only narrowly missed being on trial for murder.

A weakness in the evidence had saved him, although there was little doubt in the minds of Nick Carter and others that he had killed the man who was found dead in a doorway in Chicago the morning after Clancy was arrested for a holdup in another part of the city.

"If he recognizes me it will mean trouble, I suppose," reflected Nick Carter.

The next moment he knew that Red Clancy had undertaken an enterprise with full knowledge of the identity of his prisoner.

"I'm glad to see you again, Mr. Carter," he growled, with sarcastic politeness. "Queer how old friends meet in places where you'd never expect. How's everybody in New York? I haven't been there for quite a while. Old Chi is good enough for me."

"I hope old Chicago returns the compliment, and thinks you are good enough for her," rejoined Nick, who had determined to take things evenly until he knew what the object of Red Clancy and his party was.

The detective had seen the faces of two more of the men, and he knew now that it was the notorious "Loop Gang," of Chicago, of which Red Clancy was the directing spirit, that had waylaid him in this Siamese jungle.

The Loop gang did not confine its operations to any particular district of the United States, or even to that country at all. Its depredations had extended to many others.

It had been heard of in various parts of South and Central America, had broken the law in Yokohama, and had been chased out of Manila.

Hongkong had known the gang; so had Peking, Paris, Berlin, and London.

Red Clancy prided himself on the international scope of his operations. It was his habit to boast that he had

been around the world, and had "turned a trick" in every country he and his gang had visited.

"Now, Mr. Carter, we'll get down to business," went on Red Clancy. "We were right behind you in Bangkok, and we know what you came here for."

"We sure do," put in another very tall ruffian, leaning over the prostrate detective, "and neither me or Red wants any monkey business about it. Get me?"

"Shut up, Mason!" ordered Clancy, raising his hand threateningly. "When I want you to butt in I'll tell you. I'm doing this."

"That's all right, Red," grumbled Mason, whose natural ugliness had been accentuated by a broken nose. "I was only telling him. Go ahead. I won't say nothin' more."

"There was a lot of gems stolen from the pagoda in Bangkok, and you were sent after them," continued Clancy, addressing Carter. "Besides that, you have orders to grab off a big bunch that have been taken out of the government mines up here."

"Where did you hear all that?" asked Carter quietly.

"Don't make any difference. I have my private ways of getting on to things," replied Clancy. "Well, we came up here after you, and we heard something that passed in that shanty between you and Beveridge. He was leading you to the place, and we heard him say that it was just here."

"Yes?"

"Now we know he's shown you just where it is, and you've got to give up without any more talk."

Nick Carter was a quick thinker. While Clancy was addressing him he resolved on a plan of action which would be founded largely on bluff.

"You're right about all that, Clancy," was the detective's unexpected answer. "Beveridge did tell me that this was the place. Only, I don't think the stones are there now."

"What are you giving me?" roared Clancy menacingly. "Where's the place? Show me or as sure as you are lying there I'll croak you inside of five minutes."

"You can 'croak' me, as you call it, if you like," returned Nick in a calm tone. "But that wouldn't help you to get the stones. Look under that heap of leaves at the foot of the big tree just behind you. If you heard Beveridge say anything to me about where the stones are you must know that he mentioned that tree."

"That's so," broke in Mason. "I heard that."

"So did I," added another member of the gang. "That's right, Red. He said the tree."

Clancy and the two members of his gang who had spoken sprang at the heap of leaves and twigs at the foot of the palm tree which Nick had noticed, and which gave him his idea.

"Mind! I told you I don't believe they are there," called out Nick, who was still in charge of the fourth man, a burly rascal holding the muzzle of a revolver at his head. "When you have looked, I'll tell you where I suspect they are now."

Red Clancy and his companions took no notice of this speech. They were busy tearing at the leaves and rubbish at the foot of the tree. It looked as if it might be the hiding place of the treasure.

Suddenly Red Clancy came over to Nick and shook his huge fist in the detective's face.

"You've been fooling us, Carter!" he snarled. "You knew there was nothing under those leaves."

"I told you I didn't think there was anything there," rejoined Nick. "Any of your men will have to say they heard me."

"That's so, Red," mumbled one of the gang.

"Shut up, you!" bellowed Clancy, turning sharply on the man with his favorite threatening shake of his fist. "I heard what he said. Well, now, Carter, if you didn't think the stones were there, where did you think they were?"

"If you'll make this fellow take his gun away from my face, and let me stand up, I'll tell you."

"Let him up!" was Clancy's gruff order. "But shoot him through the head if he tries to get away."

"I'll plug him if he lifts his foot," growled the man with the pistol.

He held the weapon pointed at the detective's head until his prisoner was on his feet, and seemed disappointed that he had had no excuse to shoot.

"Now where do you suppose the stones are?" demanded Clancy.

"You know a man named John Grantley, don't you?" asked Nick.

"Sure! He's a bank sneak. Or he was. Lately I've heard of him playing confidence games, aiming for the big money."

"That's the man," said the detective. "Well, he's here."

"Here?" shouted Clancy and Mason in an astonished duet.

"Yes. He's not more than a quarter of a mile from you at this moment. And he's the man who has the stones. If he hasn't he knows where they are."

"Well, if that don't ring the bell!" ejaculated Red Clancy. "Who would have expected to find Jack Grantley in this forsaken country? Where is Grantley?"

"He'll be back in this shanty some time to-night—unless he becomes suspicious that there is a trap. But he will be somewhere in this neighborhood, even if he does not get in. So you ought not to have any trouble in getting him."

Nick Carter told this in a careless way, as a man might recite something of which he is quite sure. Then he looked at Clancy inquiringly.

"Look here, Carter," said Clancy, after a pause, during which he seemed to be reflecting deeply. "I'm going to take you to that shanty. You'll be there when this Jack Grantley comes. If I find you've told the truth I'll call it square with you."

"That's very kind," returned Nick, with just a tinge of mockery in his tone. "What is it you will call square?"

"Don't you think I've got it in for you on account of the years I've spent in Joliet? Wasn't it you that sent me there?"

"Well?" asked Nick coldly.

"I've always meant to get you for that some time."

"And now?"

"Now I see a chance to get some coin on these stones, and I'm willing to forget Joliet and all you had to do with it if I find you've given it to me straight about Grantley."

"I've told you all I know," was the detective's reply.

"I believe it. Let's get down to the shanty. Bring along that big fellow, if he can walk."

"He can't," reported Mason, as he bent over Asa Beveridge. "He's put to sleep for keeps, I guess."

"Well, leave him there," directed Red Clancy. "He won't take cold in this climate, that's sure," he added, with a grin.

The men moved off with Nick Carter as their prisoner, leaving Asa Beveridge lying across the dead leaves and twigs, still and unconscious.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ACTIVITY OF SANDOW.

When Nick Carter was led into the hut where he had ministered to the wounded Asa Beveridge, the first person he saw was his assistant, his hands tied behind him with willows, but with defiance in his face as he glanced from one to the other of the gang led by Red Clancy.

Altogether there were six of the ruffians. Clancy chose always to have plenty of help at hand when he undertook any lawless enterprise. His method was to work for what he wanted with slyness and cunning. If they failed, then he would use force.

At a brief order from Clancy, Nick was allowed to sit on one of the rude chairs. Red Clancy took a position on the corner of the table, while his followers lay around on the two bunks or the ground, as they managed to find places.

"Turn out that light!" ordered Red Clancy. "Wait! Carter, you like to smoke, I know. Light up, if you have anything to smoke. If not, I'll give you a cigarette."

"I have cigars of my own," returned Nick as he dived into a pocket and brought out a perfecto.

"Very well. Light it, and—don't stop smoking till I tell you."

"Suppose I smoke the cigar out?"

"There won't be time for that," snapped Clancy. "I want you to keep the end of your cigar good and red, so that I shall know where you are. If you let it out it will be at your own risk."

There was no mistaking the sinister meaning of this last sentence. Nick decided to keep his cigar end glowing so long as it suited his purpose.

Chick was told to smoke, too. But he said he could not smoke a cigar and feel comfortable. So, as his hands were tied behind, and he was regarded as comparatively harmless in that situation, he was permitted to forego the use of tobacco for the time being.

Out went the lamp, and there was strict silence as well as darkness for more than half an hour. By that time Nick's cigar was pretty well burned down. But he kept on smoking.

Several other red ends could be seen about the room, for all the gang were puffing tobacco.

Suddenly Nick Carter became aware, in a subtle, indefinable way, that some one was moving about the hut, although he could see, by the smoking cigarettes and pipes that all of the gang were disposed about the room.

He counted them over twice to make sure. There were six smokers.

Fingers touched the back of his hand. Then they closed about his wrist and gave it a slight, significant pressure.

The detective continued to smoke steadily. Who was this person holding his wrist and pressing it at irregular intervals with the end of his middle finger?

In a flash it came to him what the pressures meant, and this gave him a clew to the identity of the person standing, or crouching, by his side.

The mysterious individual was talking to him in the Morse alphabet. He was telegraphing a message on his wrist.

Yes, there was no doubt about it. The pressures were well marked. But the spaces between them varied, while the pressures themselves were long and short at intervals.

Slowly and silently, Nick allowed his free hand to drop upon the back of the other man's hand, so that with one finger he could telegraph: "I understand. Go on."

The message in return was one of only four letters. There were two short pressures, a space, and another short touch. Then a longer space, followed by a quick touch, a space, and another quick touch.

The first letter was "C," the second—dot space dot—"O."

This was quickly followed by two long pressures on the wrist, meaning "M," and a short touch—"E."

The word "Come" was the message.

The fingers on his wrist were loosened, as an indication that there was nothing more to be said. Nick could feel that the man had left him.

Where had he gone? Would he contrive to release Chick? Was it the person he had surmised?

No doubt about the latter in the detective's mind. He remembered that Asa Beveridge had originally worked as a telegrapher, and that he was considered an expert. It would be natural for him to use his skill in that calling at such a time as the present.

Nick Carter decided that the movements of the man who had given him a hint to get away were not of so much consequence just now as getting out of the shanty was to himself.

But there was the lighted cigar! How was he to escape without betraying himself at once to Clancy and his followers?

The detective was seated against a wall. He had been there from the first, making himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

The wall was of closely planted bamboo stakes, as has been already intimated. The stakes were touching each other in general, and this fact gave Nick Carter his idea.

He had taken the cigar from his mouth at intervals, to knock off the ash or to expel the smoke in comfort, but had always replaced it immediately, in accordance with the rule laid on him by Clancy.

Removing the cigar from his lips now, he blew out the smoke rather ostentatiously, and with as much noise as he could reasonably make.

When he had done this, he seemed to put the cigar back into his mouth.

But he didn't put it back. Instead, he carefully inserted it between two of the bamboo poles at the height of his face. Then he slipped to the floor, crawling to the opening in the wall that he had made earlier in the evening and which had been overlooked by the Clancy gang.

Once outside, he found Beveridge and Chick on either side of him.

No one spoke, but Beveridge led the way rapidly from the hut and along the path down which Clancy's men had brought Nick and his assistant as prisoners.

They reached the big tree at the foot of which Red Clancy had fruitlessly searched for the stones, and Beveridge was looking about him in the moonlight when, with a howl of rage, he leaped on a man who was stooping behind a shrub at some little distance from the tree.

But Asa Beveridge's strength was not equal to his anger. He had been badly hurt by the knife in his back, and the fact that he had been knocked senseless afterward had not improved his physical condition.

The man who was stooping, and whom Nick saw was a Siamese, turned savagely on his assailant, and in a moment had him on his back, while pressing his throat with cruel, ruthless fingers.

The Siamese was the convict, Thongu.

"Come on, Nick! We can't stand this!" shouted Chick, springing to the aid of Beveridge.

"Stop!"

Nick Carter's order came stern and loud, like the crack of a rifle.

Chick stopped in surprise. It was so unlike his chief to interfere in the rescue of a man who had been taken at a disadvantage by another who was decidedly the enemy of law and order.

But in a moment the alert Chick saw that other men were dashing along the path from the hut, and he slipped away among the trees without a word of remonstrance.

Nick Carter's inclination was to help Beveridge, because, though that gentleman was no better than he ought to be, he had consented to give up his share of the precious stones, and seemed to have been acting in good faith since making the promise.

For a moment he hesitated, although he knew that in another few seconds Clancy and his gang would be upon him.

Then he saw that Beveridge had another champion, who could get away from the Clancy gang easily, even if he were attacked by any of them.

It was Sandow, the ape.

He had been in the trees, enjoying his usual nocturnal spree with others of his kind, evidently having given up his pursuit of Grantley, and had heard his master's voice.

This had been enough to bring him, swinging from treetop to treetop, for his affection for Beveridge was as strong as it generally is in an intelligent animal when once it takes a fancy to a human being.

Sandow had come just in time to see Thongu jump on Beveridge.

Before the rascal could carry out his purpose of choking the life out of Beveridge, the ape was on his back, its long fingers clutching the man's shoulders with a power that made him feel as if he were in the grip of a steam grappler.

The ape held to Thongu even when the convict got to his feet.

It looked as if Sandow would never let go until he had killed his man.

The very ferocity of his attack saved his victim's life, however.

Red Clancy had discovered that his prisoners had escaped from the hut, and he had dashed along the path where he shrewdly guessed he would find them, since he still believed the coveted gems were hidden somewhere near the big tree.

He had come in time to see the collision between Thongu and Beveridge, and also to perceive that Nick Carter was there, too.

He did not trouble to pursue the detective. All he wanted was the gems, and it was borne in on him that he could secure them only through this Siamese convict.

"Get after that gol-durned monk!" he bellowed. "Don't let him kill the man!"

Mason and two others of the gang went to the help of Thongu, and, after a fierce struggle, dragged the apé away.

They could not hold the creature, however. With a loud chatter of defiance, Sandow hurled aside one man who had seized him, and bit viciously at the face of another.

A temporary panic overcame the gang, and Beveridge took advantage of it to slip away from them, beating his way through the jungle on the trail of Nick Carter and Chick.

The next moment the coarse face of John Grantley appeared around a tree.

Before he could make a move to escape he was a prisoner in the hands of Red Clancy and his men.

"This is luck!" growled Clancy.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GANG GAINS A POINT.

"Now, Jack Grantley," snarled Red Clancy as the prisoner was brought into the shanty and the light of the lamp turned on him. "I did not expect to get you. Now you're here you know what you have to do."

"What?" demanded Grantley. "I never saw you before that I remember."

"Try a bluff like that again and I'll choke you until that big neck of yours looks like three inches of old rope!" was the angry rejoinder. "This isn't the first time we've met, and I know what you're here for as well as I did when you just missed going over the road for that bank job in Chicago."

Grantley did not reply, but into his coarse, bloated face there came a frown of obstinacy which did not escape Clancy.

"I don't remember you," was all he said.

"Well, that's immaterial. Frisk him, boys!"

The result of this order was a surprise to Grantley.

The members of the Loop gang, of which Red Clancy was the leader, were men little inclined to courtesy at any time. When they got an order like this from their leader they went about it in the most direct way, without any regard for the feelings of the subject.

With one swift movement they had stood John Grantley on his head, and while two held him in that position, the others went through his pockets.

Not much was yielded by this process that Red Clancy desired. There was a pistol and an empty knife sheath, some Siamese money and United States bank notes—the latter in a leather wallet—and various other things that a man usually carries, including some native tobacco and a pipe.

"Is that all?" demanded Clancy, when the things had been placed on the table. "Where's the stones he has?"

"Not in his pockets," replied Mason.

"Put him on his feet," directed Red Clancy. "He's the kind of man who might blow up if he was kept upside down too long."

There was reason for saying this. Grantley's face was purple as he was allowed to stand upright in a natural position. He scowled about him defiantly, however.

"Pull open his shirt!" suddenly commanded Clancy.

The abrupt attempt of the prisoner to back away, involuntary as it was, made the other rascal grin knowingly.

"I can't get it open," replied Mason. "It's laced up with leather strings and tied in a knot."

"*Cut it!*"

A knife was used with promptness, and the next minute a large, flat chamois-leather bag, which looked like a large, double chest protector, was pulled off the prisoner and laid on the table by the side of his other personal property.

Clancy passed his hand over the bag, and grinned as he felt lumps all over it.

"Not a bad way to carry them, Grantley," he grunted. "If you'd had them all in a bunch they'd have been noticed right away. But flattening them out this way, so that they covered all your chest, and padded with paper, they might get by almost any one."

As the leader of the gang spoke, he was ripping up the side of the bag, and soon had a large heap of rubies, diamonds, emeralds, amethysts, and other gems lying in a glittering heap before him.

"These are the things you got in Bangkok, Grantley," remarked Clancy easily. "I can see that by the way they are cut and polished. Here's some of the cement sticking to them here and there. How did you get these away from the statues in the pagodas? Dig 'em out with a knife?"

Grantley did not answer. But his scowl was expressive. He seemed to be biding his time.

"Well, I'll take these, Grantley," continued Clancy. "But this is not all. I want the big bunch from the mine that you have hidden somewhere. You'll tell me where it is or you'll never get away alive."

Grantley shrugged his shoulders. He was not a particularly brave man. But the reckless life he had led for years, always in defiance of the law, had made him more ready to take chances than if his existence had always been respectably humdrum.

He noted that Clancy swept the jewels back into the chamois bag and allowed them to remain on the table.

"You can put your other things in your pockets. And fasten up your shirt. I don't want anything from you except the stones in this bag and the others you are going to show me."

"I don't know what you mean by the other stones," insisted Grantley.

Red Clancy did not reply to this. Instead, he nodded to Mason, obviously in accordance with some previous understanding.

Mason advanced toward the prisoner, a large knife in his hand, which he pointed toward Grantley's heart as if to assure himself that he would not miss his aim.

This man Mason was a particularly terrifying individual. Some two or three inches over six feet in height, his proportions were such that he did not seem so tall. He was built on the pattern of Sandow, the ape, except that there was much more of him.

He had the long arms of the monkey tribe, and his face, broken nose and all, had not much more expression than some of that species. His strength was enormous.

Grantley shrank away as Mason stepped slowly forward, the knife always directed at his chest.

Neither man spoke a word, while the others of the gang stood or sat still and watched, as if they were enjoying the curious spectacle.

It looked as if Mason were actually charming the prisoner, slowly retreating as his foe advanced.

But this was not the case. Grantley had nothing like the strength and agility of Mason. But he had infinitely more mental power. He was, indeed, as cunning a rascal as ever came up the Meinam River.

Mason thought he had so terrified the man that he would be unable to do anything but obey Clancy's orders when the knife should actually touch his chest.

This was where Mr. Mason miscalculated.

John Grantley had, seemingly without realizing it, always retreated in the direction of the door, which was guarded only by the hanging grass that could be pushed through in a moment.

"Are you going to show the boss where those stones are?" growled Mason at last.

"Wait a minute!" was Grantley's almost inarticulate response.

"What's that?" roared Mason. "Speak louder, so that I can hear you."

"Look out!" warned Red Clancy.

But he was too late. John Grantley had made a quick dart at the table for the chamois bag. Then he plunged through the grass door and was gone in the darkness.

He had taken advantage of something which had entered into his calculations in deciding to get away—namely, that the moon had been going down. It was quite black outside.

"He'll go to the river!" shouted Clancy. "Come on, men! Look out for our boat!"

The river was several miles away, but Clancy realized that the shrewd Grantley would be sure to make some plans for getting away, now that he was pushed into a corner by the gang on one side and Nick Carter and Beveridge on the other.

In Bangkok the Clancy gang had engaged one of the capacious motor boats that are not uncommon, even in Siam, at the present day, and of which there are several to be seen around Bangkok at any time.

In this boat they had set forth under the guise of an exploring party, saying that hunting was part of their object.

Once away from the city they had made their way direct to the place where their information was that Grantley and another man were getting rich very fast in precious stones.

Red Clancy, ruffian as he was, had a good share of commercial shrewdness, and he had laid out his present campaign with more care than might have been thought as one looked at his brutish features.

Now that Grantley had run away, to avoid telling the secret of the large hoard which Clancy felt sure was somewhere close at hand, it was quite reasonable to think that he would go clear away from the mines for a time,

returning at his leisure to gain possession of the stones when no one was about.

Having the gems he had stolen from the pagodas, he could raise all the money he wanted.

So sure did Clancy feel that this would be the move of Grantley, that he did not take the trouble to go back to the big tree, near which he was convinced the stones were hidden.

"It'll be a long hike, boys!" he remarked to his followers in a surly tone. "But there's nothing else for us to do. This cur isn't going to get away with our boat. If he did I don't know how we would ever get back to Bangkok."

"How do you suppose those other fellows up here intend to get back?"

Red Clancy did not answer—for the very good reason that he had nothing to say.

CHAPTER X.

EIGHTY-FIVE FEET.

When Red Clancy and his men made a prisoner of John Grantley, after the rescue of Beveridge by his ape, Sandow, none of them took the trouble to see what had become of Nick Carter and his two companions.

Yet Nick was not far away. Indeed, he saw the whole proceeding of the capture of Grantley, and was ready to take advantage of their absence at once.

It was true that, on first eluding the Clancy gang, Nick and his assistant both had put considerable space between themselves and the ruffians, so that when Asa Beveridge darted away on their trail it led him a long way into the jungle.

But as soon as they discovered that they were not followed by the Red Clancy party, Nick decided to get back and see what became of Grantley.

He realized that, now so many people were up there looking for the hidden treasure, he must operate quickly if he meant to do anything at all.

While Nick had not been shown just where the stones were secreted, his active brain had enabled him to see into the mystery, and he felt certain that if he were left alone for half an hour he could get to them.

Waiting until the coast was clear, Nick noted that the moonlight would last for another half hour. Then she would go down.

"That will give me enough light, Chick. I wish it had been daylight, however, because I want to know the height of that tree. If the sun were out I could make a calculation by the shadow. As it is I shall have to guess. What should you say it was?"

"The height of that tree?" murmured Chick reflectively. "Well, if you ask me I should put it at nearly a hundred feet."

"Not a bad guess, Chick," was Nick Carter's response. "But I am pretty sure you overestimate it by fifteen feet at least. It is from eighty to eighty-five feet or I'm much mistaken."

"I suppose you're right," remarked Chick. "You generally are. But what about it?"

"Step off eighty-five feet over to the right there. I'll do it a little to the left. You can calculate eighty-five feet by your paces, can't you?"

"Yes. That's easy."

The two stepped off the distance, and when they had finished there was about two yards between them.

"You see, Chick, I've seen both Grantley and Beveridge stepping off these distances. I could not see how far they were going, but I guessed it was the height of the tree because I know that is a plan often pursued in the woods to get a mark."

"I've heard that," said Chick. "But I don't know why you wanted us both to measure it off, and at this distance apart."

"I'll explain. I carefully noted where I saw Beveridge walking, and I made a mark where he stopped. Look!"

Nick showed where there had been a stick driven into the soft ground so that only about two inches remained above the surface. It was so hidden in the leaves, twigs, and rotting verdure that a casual passer-by would not see it at all.

"When did you see Beveridge do this?"

"Yesterday, when I came over here to reconnoiter by myself, leaving you at the other side of the laborers' shanties," replied Nick, with a smile.

"Oh, now I understand!" exclaimed Chick. "I didn't know what you were going to do besides look over the ground. You didn't tell me what you'd seen, did you?"

"It wasn't necessary, Chick. I did not attach much importance to it at the time. How could I know then that they had hidden their stones in this place? But I happen to have a way of noting anything I see that is a little out of the ordinary, that's all."

"It's a good thing you noted this, anyhow," observed Chick.

"Perhaps. I can't tell yet. Get down on your hands and knees, with your pocket flash, and search under the leaves and stuff. Perhaps you will find something that will help."

Chick did as he was told. With a stout stick in his hand, he raked the leaves about for several minutes. He could not find anything to reward his labor.

Nick Carter was equally unsuccessful.

Still, the detective felt sure the rich deposit of illegally procured gems was somewhere near the big tree, and that the pacing off which he had seen Beveridge do on the morning of the day before, and had afterward observed done by Grantley in almost the same spot, would help to guide him.

"Try again, Chick," he said evenly.

"Very well. But it doesn't seem hopeful."

"Many tasks don't seem hopeful until we get to success," was Nick Carter's quiet response. "I'm going to look over my ground again."

For ten minutes neither spoke. Both were assiduously scratching in the rubbish. Nick was wondering whether they would find what he wanted before some of the Red Clancy gang came back.

Suddenly a low ejaculation from Chick made him look over quickly.

"What have you found?"

"Nothing particular. I fell over a string or something. I suppose it is one of the long, thin roots that are all over the ground."

"Let me see."

Nick felt for the string that Chick had grumbled at, and looked at it by the light of his flash lamp.

"This isn't a root, Chick. It's a string—regular hempen

cord. And it's fastened somewhere. How did you come across it?"

"One end was twisted around this little sapling. I don't know where the other goes."

Nick Carter indulged in a low chuckle.

"By George! I believe you've found something Chick!" he said, in a low, tense tone.

He had taken the string in his hand, and was following it along, being careful not to tug too hard for fear it might break.

The string took him straight to a bushy shrub, and there it ended.

It was knotted to one of the osierlike twigs that stuck up like porcupine quills from the midst of the shrub, without any leaves to relieve their bareness.

"Hold your light, Chick!"

The assistant obeyed, and Nick began pulling at some of the gaunt spears.

All were tight till he got to a certain one which he pulled easily at the first tug.

"Ah!" muttered the detective. "This is the keynote. I don't think I'll have much more trouble."

He had recognized the shrub as one of the plants peculiar to the climate, and he knew that the osierlike spears were so tight, as a rule, that nothing short of a strong spade could ever bring them out of the ground.

The fact that one of them had yielded at once told him that it had been thrust in there, not by nature, but by the hand of man.

He soon found about a dozen more that would yield at a slight tug.

When he had them all out there was a mass of soft and tumbled earth into which he thrust his hands as easily as he might have done into a bowl of sand.

A slight cry of triumph arose from him in another half minute.

"Got 'em?" whispered Chick eagerly.

For answer Nick brought up a small bag, rudely fashioned, of burlap, and held it up in the light of his flash lamp.

CHAPTER XI.

READY TO DELIVER.

There were six of these bags, and each contained an assortment of precious stones just as they had been taken from the mine.

That means that many of them looked like chunks of dried earth more than precious stones, although to the expert there could be no doubt of their nature at almost a glance.

"This is the place, Chick," said Nick quietly. "Help me get them out."

It was soon decided that Nick Carter would carry the contents of four of the bags, leaving two for Chick, and when they had disposed the treasure in different parts of their clothing—some of it inside their shirts and the rest in pockets—Nick looked about for Asa Beveridge.

"That man has been square with us," remarked the detective. "Even if he has a record not particularly clean, he deserves recognition for what he has done."

"He is nothing like as bad as Grantley," declared Chick warmly. "By the side of that cur, Beveridge strikes me as being rather a decent citizen."

"I wish we could take him with us," went on Nick. "If he stays up here, with that wound in his back, he is going to take a fever and go off the hooks, even if he escapes Grantley's knife again or is not knocked on the head by some of the Red Clancy bunch."

They spent several minutes listening for a sign of Asa Beveridge's presence in the vicinity, and, flash light in hand, plunged in various directions through the bushes.

"It's no use," exclaimed Nick at last. "We can't wait any longer for him. Let's get to the river."

"How?"

"You remember that man who has a sort of elephant farm a few miles from Ayuthia?"

"Of course I do," replied Chick. "If it hadn't been for him and his elephant we should have had to walk all the way from the river up here. Do you think we can get him to give us a lift this time?"

"Yes. He ought to be close by now. That is, within three or four miles. He was out on an elephant hunt when we came up, you know."

"That's so. He's employed by the government to get elephants for the park at Ayuthia, isn't he?"

"Yes. That's his business. Now hurry!"

Nick was more fortunate than he had hoped to be in finding the elephant hunter and trainer. He and Chick came across him in the jungle not more than two miles from the place in which they had found the stones.

As is well known, the elephant is a sacred animal in Siam, and every elephant is the property of the king.

To keep up the supply of royal elephants, men are sent into the forests to capture wild ones, which are speedily tamed in the stockades at Ayuthia and other elephant depots along the Meinam River.

The work is done in a well-defined system.

When the hunter, or scout, finds signs of elephants in the forest or jungle, he brings the news back to headquarters. Then the mode of procedure is to set some of the trained female elephants loose, to entice the wild ones into the stockade.

After being free for a few days, the trained females are recalled by a peculiar whistle, and they come back usually attended in each case by a wild male.

This trainer, who had helped Nick Carter and his assistant to make good time from the river in coming into the wilderness, was quite willing, for a liberal fee, to take them back.

He had two elephants with him. One he was riding, and the other—a well-tamed female—was to be used as a decoy for some wild elephant the trainer hoped to catch.

Nick Carter and Chick did not mind riding elephants, and they rather enjoyed their trip down to the river, where they found the boat they had hired from Bangkok, with its attendant, modestly hidden under a screen of great spreading palms which overhung the water.

There was no particular incident on the way down the river, and two days later Nick sent word by Chick to Señor Ribiero that he was prepared to hand over the immense treasure in gems that he had found eighty-five feet from the great palm tree in the wilderness.

"What did he have to say?" asked Nick as his assistant returned to the hotel, after visiting Ribiero in the government building.

"Tickled to death," was the brief reply.

"Did you tell him that he'd better not let anybody know what I had?"

"Yes. He said he would not say anything, of course.

He would like you to go to his office about ten o'clock to-morrow morning to take the stones to him."

Chick said this demurely, as if it were quite a matter of course. But he was glancing at his chief out of the corner of his eyes, and was not at all surprised when Nick broke out explosively:

"About ten to-morrow morning? And it is now three o'clock in the afternoon! Why not let me take them to him now? Am I to be saddled with the responsibility of them all night?"

"Looks like it," grinned Chick. "That is Siamese etiquette, I guess."

"Siamese idiocy!" rejoined Nick, his eyes flashing. "I thought he was anxious to get these stones. Why, they are worth millions of dollars, and he very coolly says he'll take them to-morrow."

Chick did not say anything to this, and after a few moments of reflection. Nick Carter looked at him and smiled.

His sense of humor had come to the rescue. He knew that the Siamese are a punctilious people, and that their dignity often stands before their real interest.

"All right, Chick," he said in a calm tone. "We'll have to wait till Señor Ribiero can spare time to take these things. I wish we had the other gems that were taken from the pagoda. But——"

The two had been standing in the shaded portico of the hotel, gazing carelessly down the picturesque street. Nick suddenly seized his assistant by the sleeve and pulled him backward, out of sight of the passers-by.

"What's the matter, chief?" demanded Chick.

"Look!"

"By George!"

Coming jauntily down the main thoroughfare, evidently having just stepped ashore from one of the myriads of boats that ply about the canals and river at Bangkok, and dressed in white linen from head to foot was no less a person than John Grantley—or, as he chose to be known in Bangkok, Ralph Stanton.

"He's coming right to this hotel," whispered Chick. "Let's get where he can't see us."

Nick and Chick stepped back into the courtyard of the low building—half European and half Siamese in its architecture—and, slipping around the covered way which led into the main structure, reached the bedroom that he and his assistant occupied on the second floor.

From one of the windows overlooking the courtyard they could see Grantley come in. He stalked along, quite with the air of one with whom the world had gone well and who was in the habit of being treated with respect if not reverence.

"Look at the scallops he puts on!" commented Chick.

"He has managed to dress himself in new clothes since he got down from the jungle," was his chief's response. "That shows he had a base of supplies here in Bangkok. I see," he added a moment later. "He left his baggage in this hotel in charge of the manager when he went up the country. Hello! He is coming in to the house."

"That's so. His room seems to be on this floor, too. He is on the outside wooden steps over there. Now he's at the top."

"Yes. He's walking around the gallery. Mind he doesn't see you at the window, Chick."

"I'll take care. But what gets me is that the manager never said a word about that man having his baggage here. It would have helped us some in keeping track of him."

"Why should the manager tell us anything about another guest's affairs?" said Nick.

While talking they had been watching the approach of Grantley as he strolled slowly around the bamboo outer gallery and finally entered a doorway near their window.

There was no glass in the windows—none is needed in a climate that has a mean temperature of more than eighty degrees, which is the record in Bangkok, so that Nick and his lieutenant could hear the self-satisfied "Hem!" of Grantley as he passed one of the obsequious servants of the hotel.

"Well, chief!" whispered Chick as they heard Grantley go into the next room. "What next?"

"I'm going to have those gems he stole from the pagoda," replied Nick in a matter-of-fact way.

"Of course. What is the plan?"

"I'll show you. Follow me," returned Nick Carter as he moved toward the door of his room.

He went out to the corridor upon which opened all the bedrooms on that floor, and stood outside the door of the next room.

"He's in there," whispered Chick. "I can hear him wheezing."

"Keep quiet," warned Nick. "We don't want any noise about this. Whatever we may have to do in that room, don't forget that."

Chick nodded, and his chief took an automatic pistol from his pocket.

"You are not going to fire, are you?" asked Chick. "What about not making any noise then?"

"I don't expect to be obliged to fire," was the quiet reply. "Be ready!"

With a swift movement, Nick Carter burst open the light door of the bedroom, his pistol aimed straight before him.

Then he stopped suddenly

For once the great detective had to admit to himself that he was taken by surprise.

CHAPTER XII.

"WHEN THIEVES FALL OUT."

Only for a second was Nick Carter taken aback, however. With a quick order to Chick to be ready with his pistol he dashed forward and seized by the neck—Red Clancy.

At the same time he saw that Grantley was in the grip of the gang leader.

It was a strange battle that took place for a few minutes because for that space of time there was no sound but the heavy breathing of the combatants.

Red Clancy evidently had sprung upon Grantley from behind as he entered the room, and the gigantic Mason, with two others of the gang, had gone to the assistance of their leader.

Nick had seen Clancy choking Grantley on the bed, and had interposed by taking hold of Clancy by the back of his bull neck.

So unexpected had been Nick Carter's attack that Clancy had let his victim on the bed wriggle out of his fingers.

When he saw that it was Nick Carter who had suddenly

broken into the room, his big mouth widened in a snarl of gratification.

"Say, boys! This is better than ever! Now we'll just clean up good. I don't care for what Grantley has so long as we land the big prize! Hold him, boys! I believe he's got it about him."

Two of the ruffians seized Nick, while the other two, reënforced by two more, first knocked Chick down and tied him with a sheet from the bed, and then turned on Nick Carter.

It was here that they found themselves in a quandary. They knew they must not make a noise, and yet it would not be easy to overcome this determined detective without making a racket.

One of them had swept Nick's pistol out of his hand with a blackjack. The same man was trying busily to land a blow on the detective's head that would "put him out."

But Nick Carter had his back against a wall, and when the fellow struck at him with the blackjack, Nick seized the weapon in an iron grip and twisted it out of his grasp.

The others were without any weapons but knives, and so far they had not drawn them.

"Don't kill him, boys!" ordered Clancy. "It would make too much of a fuss in this place. We have to stay here for a few days till we can get a ship to take us out."

"We won't kill him," grunted the gigantic Mason. "But we're going to have those stones. That's the idea, isn't it?"

"Of course. Have you a man on the watch outside?"

"Yes. Joe Greene is there."

"All right. If any of those hotel guys come along, mind he doesn't get on what we're doing."

Mason nodded. Then he, with the other four men, rushed at the detective all at once.

So violent was the charge that it took Nick right off his feet and sent him headlong to the bed where they had thrown Chick.

"Now we have him!" growled Mason in an undertone. "Let's see if he has the stones on him."

With many oaths, but all under their breath, the ruffians tore at the detective's coat and shirt. They soon convinced themselves that there were no gems about him.

"I've a mind to drive a knife into him for luck!" declared Mason.

"You'll do nothing of the kind," came from Red Clancy. "You and the others stay in here while I go into his room. He must have them there somewhere."

Before Mason could reply, Red Clancy had gone out, and Nick knew that his private property, as well as Chick's, would be thoroughly overhauled.

"Say, boys! We can't let Clancy do that!" said Mason, turning to the remainder of the gang, while he kept his knee in Nick Carter's back. "Hurry up and tie this one while we go and see what kind of game Red is giving us. He's liable to grab off the whole thing!"

This was another example of the falsity of the saying that there is honor among thieves. There was not one of Red Clancy's gang who would trust another. Each was suspicious of his comrades, and suspicion among such men means cautiousness that may at any time result in murder.

They put another sheet around Nick Carter and knotted it tightly. Then the whole crowd slipped out of the room.

Strangely enough, they had not taken the precaution to gag their prisoners. Perhaps they figured that, even if there were an outcry, it would take the attachés of the hotel some time to find out where the sound came from.

More likely it was because they did not want to spend the time while Clancy was going through the possessions of the detective and his assistant in the next room.

The hurry with which the rascals bound them defeated their purpose. It did not take Nick long to undo his own bonds. Then he got the sheet off Chick.

"Do you think they will find the stones?" asked Chick, in a whisper.

"They will if they look long enough," was the detective's reply. "But I don't intend to let them do it."

Nick Carter picked up his pistol, which lay where it had been thrown, and kept it in his hand.

He stole to the door. There was nobody in the corridor, and in the adjoining room, where he knew the members of the gang were rummaging through his traveling bag and other things, was almost complete silence.

Red Clancy and his men were accustomed to working quietly. Their doings very often were not of a kind to court general attention.

"Look here, Chick!" whispered Nick.

"Well?"

"Go quietly down to the office of the hotel and ask the manager to get three or four policemen—as many as he can find quickly—and send them up to my room."

"I saw three of the guards of the Hall of Audience, at the palace, hanging around the front of the hotel, when we came in," suggested Chick.

"I know. I saw them, too. They act as police when required. If they are there, tell them to come up. Tell the manager, too."

"Will you stay outside this room till they come?"

"Yes; but hurry. Clancy and his men might come out, and I want to nail them before they know I am here," replied Nick.

Chick waited to hear no more. Dashing down a side staircase, so that he would not have to show himself outside, in case any of the rascals were near the window, he made his way rapidly to the office.

The manager of the hotel—an American named Swift, with whom Nick Carter and Chick both had become on very good terms—listened to Chick's story and then ran out to get the guards.

The three guards that Nick Carter had seen were just greeting another of their comrades as Swift went out.

The soldiers wore little clothing. Their principal garment was a light cloth shirt, with a belt, in which were attached a long sword and a modern revolver. Their trousers, cut off at the knee, left their brown legs and feet exposed. A small uniform cap completed their equipment.

A few words in their own tongue from Swift was enough to put them all on the qui vive.

"This way!" called out Chick to the manager.

Swift spoke again to the guards, and they all ran quickly, but silently, up the stairs.

As they got to the top, Chick heard his chief's voice raised in anger, while the gruff tones of Red Clancy rumbled through the corridor menacingly.

"Hurry!" shouted Chick, not trying to keep his voice

down, now that he had plenty of men with him to help. "They've got the chief in that room!"

This was true. Nick had been seen by one of the rascals, just as Red Clancy had joyfully announced the finding of the precious stones sewn into the mattress.

"Hold him!" ordered Red Clancy, as the detective was dragged into the room. "Where's the other?"

None of his men knew, and there was not one of them inclined to go out to see. The general attention was on Red Clancy, who was stuffing the bags of jewels into his capacious pockets, regardless of everything else.

"Hey, Red!" suddenly shouted Mason. "Come off, will you?"

"What's the matter with you?" snarled Red Clancy, as he put another bag of the gems inside his shirt. "Watch that door!"

"I'll watch nothing!" retorted Mason. "Who gave you the right to take the whole swag? Divvy up, will you?"

"I will, later."

"No, you won't. You'll do it right now!" was Mason's rejoinder, as he moved slowly toward the leader.

"That's right, Mason," put in Greene. "We want ours now."

"You do, eh?" shouted Red Clancy, with a fearful oath. "You'll get it when I say so. And if you give me any lip, you won't get any. And that goes for you, Mason, as well as the others."

"For me?" shouted Mason.

"Yes. Take my advice, and shut up!"

During this brief, and decidedly heated, colloquy, Nick Carter had been quietly contemplating the scene, without trying to break the hold of the man who held him by the elbow.

He could have shaken him off without any difficulty. But he was content to let the man have his hand where it was until the moment should come for action.

Chick had gone in a hurry to find help, and the detective knew his assistant well enough to be convinced that he would be back in a very short time with reënforcements.

Meanwhile, he was watching the bags of gems going into Red Clancy's clothing, silently deciding that Mr. Clancy would never get past the door with his booty.

The stones had been taken out of the burlap bags for convenience of carrying, when Nick and his assistant brought them down from the wilderness. But they had been returned to the bags when the detective had reached the hotel.

For a moment or two after Red Clancy had ordered his principal follower to "Shut up!" there was nothing said.

The other men knew Mason's vindictive nature and ungovernable temper. They were expecting him to fly at Clancy.

But Mason did not do so at once. He chose to be dramatic.

Walking quietly to the side of the bed, where Red Clancy was coolly ripping up the mattress a little more with his knife, he laid his hand on the leader's brawny arm.

"Hold on, Red!"

"What's that?" ripped out Clancy.

"I want my share, Red! That's what," returned Mason, with ominous calmness.

His right hand went inside his shirt.

"You want your share?" repeated Clancy, straightening up slowly, the knife with which he had been cutting the stitches of the mattress firmly grasped in his right hand.

"Yes," was the reply.

For a fraction of an instant there was silence and inaction.

Then, as the knife in Red Clancy's hand flashed in the rays of the setting sun that streamed through the unglazed window, the great bully seized Mason with his left hand and hissed:

"Your share? Take it!"

If it had been anybody smaller or weaker than Mason who faced this furious desperado, he must have gone down before the attack without a chance to save himself.

But Mason was as ferocious as Clancy. Besides, he had the advantage in size.

On the other hand, Clancy was more calculating in a combat, and knew how to avail himself cunningly of any opening better than did the other man.

Nick Carter, saying to himself, in some amusement, that these rascals were helping him in what he had to do by quarreling among themselves, also noted that, taken altogether, the two big ruffians were pretty evenly matched.

"Let them fight it out," he muttered.

He would not have interfered with their duel, now, on any account, even if he could have done so without all the other members of the gang piling on top of him together.

He was quite content to let things take their course.

When Red Clancy dashed at Mason with his knife, somehow he missed his aim.

The blade did not sink into his adversary's chest, as he had intended. Instead, Mason's knife flashed up and met the other blade with a spiteful clang.

The two blades pressed against each other while one might count two. Then, as Mason made a lightning thrust, Clancy parried.

The next instant he came back, intending to send the point of his weapon into his adversary's heart.

Again Clancy failed.

"Not yet, Red!" shouted Mason, with a savage chuckle. "You can't beat me with any such knife play as that! Let me show you!"

Mason had been watching his opportunity while taunting his foe.

Now, when Clancy stooped, turning the handle of the knife in his hand for another stroke, Mason darted to one side, out of the way. The next second he had driven his knife into Red Clancy's shoulder to the very hilt!

"Now, will you divide?" yelled Mason, viciously dragging forth his blade. "Or do you want some more?"

If Mason had not been so exultant, no doubt he would have been on his guard for a reprisal.

Red Clancy was mortally wounded. There could be no doubt about that, for Mason had stabbed him through the shoulder, almost to the heart.

It is often the case, however, that a fighter wounded to the death has enough strength left in him to deal a fearful blow at his adversary before collapsing.

It was so now.

Just as Mason drew his knife out of the ghastly wound he had made, Red Clancy summoned all his fast-ebbing strength, and, with a horrible curse of vengeance, thrust his knife upward at the other's body. He caught his foe in such a way that he could not even groan.

Mason fell, with a crash, at full length, diagonally across the room.

"You wanted yours—did you?" gasped Red Clancy, as

he dragged backward across the bed. "Well, I reckon you got it!"

Those were Clancy's last words. A convulsive shiver passed through his huge frame, and for all the wickedness he had done in his life there was no more human punishment.

The members of the Loop gang, led by Red Clancy, had no sentiment. They had been accustomed to face the possibility of death, as well as imprisonment; as something that might come to any of them on any day.

So, no sooner was their leader out of this world, together with the big man who had exercised over them a terrorism as great as Clancy's, than the four others of the gang rushed forward to drag the bags of gems out of Red Clancy's big pockets.

Nick Carter had counted the packages, and he knew that the whole six were about the person of the dead leader.

The four gangsters had been so absorbed in the battle that they had not even thought of Nick Carter when the end came. Instead, each was intent only on getting as much of the swag as he could keep from his comrades.

The ruffians swooped down upon the body of Red Clancy at once like a quartet of carrion vultures.

"Get back!" howled one of the four to the others.

"Stand away yourself!" came from another.

Each man drew a knife.

Joe Greene, who had been the sentinel, was one who took quick advantage of whatever came his way.

He did not trouble to quarrel. Seeing one of the larger bags of stones sticking out of a pocket of the dead man, right under his hand, he seized it and darted toward the door.

To his dismay, a steellike grip came to his throat, and, as Nick Carter tore the bag of stones out of his grasp, he swung the discomfited villain out of the door, plump into the hands of Chick.

"Thanks, chief!" said Chick coolly. "Any more?"

He had passed the unlucky Joe Greene to two of the Siamese guards who were in the corridor, and came in with Nick to see what else there was to be done.

By this time a three-handed fight was in progress over the dead Clancy. Not one of the three participants had noticed, either, that Joe Greene had been made a prisoner or that there was anybody else in the room.

The first intimation they had that the game had turned against them was when Nick Carter seized one man, and Chick another, dragging them backward so suddenly that they were helpless.

Before they could recover sufficiently to attempt to use their knives, both were in custody of guards in the corridor, each with a long sword pointed at his heart.

Siamese officers are generally dexterous with the sword, and these rascals had been long enough in the country to be fully aware of the fact.

Moreover, the disturbance in Nick Carter's room had attracted general attention, and there was such a mob behind the guards that there could be no chance for the prisoners to escape.

The attitude of the third gangster, still standing by the side of his deceased leader, was laughable.

He remained there, his knife hanging helplessly in his fingers, as he stared at Nick Carter and Chick, and saw his fellow ruffians passed to the stern-looking Siamese guards without.

"Come on!" said Nick pleasantly. "Drop that knife!"

The man threw it on the bed and raised his two hands mechanically, as the detective pointed his automatic at the head of his prisoner.

"I think that is the whole of the Red Clancy gang," remarked Nick, when he had passed the fourth man to the guards. "Red Clancy and Mason are both gone, and the other four are prisoners. That's all, Mr. Swift! Will you have the guards put the prisoners in jail? I'll appear against them in the morning."

"Have they taken anything of yours, Mr. Carter?" asked Swift.

"I don't think so. But I'll just look at these bags in Red Clancy's pockets, to make quite sure."

A hasty investigation satisfied the detective that he had got all the bags of stones that had been brought down from the jungle.

"Everything is all right," he announced. "But I wish somebody would persuade Señor Ribiero to come here and take the king's property."

Nobody did, however. The guards moved off with their prisoners and locked them up, but no one came to relieve Nick Carter and Chick of the responsibility of the precious stones.

It was not until ten o'clock next morning that Señor Ribiero consented to receive the famous American detective and his assistant.

When Nick Carter finally found himself in the presence of the suave and smiling minister, he was inclined to throw the bags of stones in his face, instead of giving them to him in the ordinary way.

But he restrained himself. He had traveled so much that he knew he must make allowance for foreign customs, and he realized that Señor Ribiero was only following rigid etiquette in what he was doing.

"I suppose if I were an officer of the palace of the King of Siam, I should be behaving in the same way," was his inward remark. "Anyhow, I am glad to have got his gems for him."

"What about the jewels that were stolen from the pagoda?" asked Señor Ribiero, when he had willingly paid the detective the large fee he required for his services. "Have you any hope of recovering them?"

"Not in Bangkok, I am afraid," replied Nick. "A tramp steamer sailed away early this morning, and I understand the man I suspect of having those stones is on board."

"You mean Ralph Stanton, Mr. Carter?"

"Yes. That is the name he assumed down there. I have known him elsewhere as John Grantley."

"Do you think you can ever catch him?"

"I'll try. That is, if you have an agent in New York with whom I can deal in case I want to get into communication with a representative of his majesty, the King of Siam, in a hurry."

"We have a representative of this government in that city, Mr. Carter. He holds no official title, but he has authority to represent me in any unexpected matter that may come up. I will give you his address."

Señor Ribiero wrote a name and address on a small sheet of paper, showed it to Nick, and then inclosed it in an envelope.

"You are not going to leave Bangkok for some time, I hope, Mr. Carter?" asked Señor Ribiero politely.

"We shall leave on Thursday," returned Nick. "There is a steamer leaving for Yokohama then, and I have

taken passage on it for my assistant and myself. From Yokohama we shall go to San Francisco, and so home to New York."

"I am sorry you are going so soon," returned Señor Ribiero. "I should like to have presented you to his majesty."

"Thank you," answered Nick Carter. "Perhaps the next time we are in Bangkok, we may have that honor."

When they were outside the palace, Chick remarked, with an expressive shrug:

"I wouldn't want to come back to Bangkok for a while, even to meet the ace of spades, let alone just a king."

"Don't be too funny, Chick," laughed Nick Carter.

THE END.

You will find the great detective back in New York again in the story that you will read in the next issue of this weekly, No. 128, out February 20th. The forthcoming narrative is entitled "Six Men in a Loop; or, Nick Carter's Twisted Mystery," and it deals with more of the criminal actions of some of the rogues that you have just read about.

ON A DARK STAGE.

By ROLAND ASHFORD PHILLIPS.

CHAPTER I.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

Swinging off the crowded Broadway car, Klein darted into a quiet side street. A soft May twilight was stealing silently and mysteriously over the great city. The high arcs and a few yellow, flaming signs on Broadway—those harbingers of night—were leaping into brilliant life. Klein ducked a taxicab, grinned at the chauffeur, gained the sidewalk, and began scanning the dim numbers on the doors of the brownstone fronts.

The magic of springtime was in the air. A street piano suddenly burst into melody, and a group of scurrying children answered, as they must have answered the call of the Pied Piper centuries ago. Birds were twittering sleepily in the trees that lined the walk; a smell of growing things hung heavily about. The breeze from Bryant Park stirred the curtains in the open windows, and brought with it the fragrance of many flowers.

Klein whistled to himself, finally caught sight of the number he was searching for, ran up the stone steps, and was on the point of ringing the bell when a girl came out of the house, smiled, and held the door ajar.

"Isn't this where Mr. Delmar lives?" Klein asked.

"Yes, sir. Top floor, rear."

He thanked her, entered the stuffy hall with its single yellow gas jet, sniffed hungrily at the odor that drifted up from the basement dining room, and climbed the narrow stairs.

After the last flight he found the rear door, and knocked. No answer. He tried again—louder; then, realizing what happened to be the truth, put his lips to the crack of the door.

"Hello, Delmar! You in there? It's me—Klein!"

Instantly a bolt was shot back, and the door opened.

"Thought that would bring you," Klein said, laughing and stepping quickly inside, after which Delmar locked the door once more. "I've lived in boarding houses before, Delmar. When I knocked, you thought it was the landlady, didn't you?"

Delmar, a man seemingly Klein's age, laughed, and they shook hands. "That's about the size of it, Klein," he admitted. "I've been dodging the old girl for the past two weeks. What's new on Main Street?"

"Nothing much. I've been pounding the asphalt for two weeks or more. Closed the first of the month in Detroit, and came straight here looking for a summer job. You're not looking any too bright, Delmar. What's the trouble?"

Delmar shrugged. "You've been in the show business long enough to know that. I came to New York in January, and haven't worked a day since. Then I got a bad cold and was laid up. Oh, I've had a successful season, I have."

"Why didn't you let me know?" asked Klein, looking sharply into the other's eyes. "You're a pretty one, you are. Why, you kept writing me that——"

"Well, why shouldn't I lie?" Delmar interrupted, throwing up his hands and sinking into a chair. "You've had troubles of your own. Besides, I thought every day something would turn up, and then I could——"

"Got anything in view?" asked Klein, a sudden idea flashing over him.

"Not a thing. I went out a couple of days ago; but I got so faint climbing those infernal stairs, and——" He broke off and turned his head away.

Klein understood. Just as the other had said, he had not been in the theatrical business without gaining some experience about such things. He had known what it was to tramp those weary miles of agency stairs, only to meet with a curt: "Nothing for you to-day." It was bad enough when one had three good meals a day, and a fairly decent room to go to at night. But when it came to hunting fifteen-cent, table-d'hôte dinners, with a glass of buttermilk between times, and then creeping in late at night in order to dodge the landlady—creeping to such a room as Delmar's——

"Look here, Delmar," he spoke up, after a hasty survey of the dingy room. "Get rid of that bath robe, put on your Sunday best, and burn up the sidewalk to the Albany Hotel."

"What for?"

"To get a job, of course," answered Klein.

"But I——"

"Will you please get into your clothes and shut up?" interrupted Klein. "Hurry now. You've got to be at the hotel by eight o'clock."

Delmar, finally convinced that Klein was serious, obeyed with alacrity. Klein watched him for a moment or two, and then resumed:

"Haven't any objection to a stock engagement this summer, have you?"

"I'd play four shows a day if——"

"Well, this is the Hudson Stock. Heard of it, haven't you? One of the best stocks on the coast. Hudson is halfway between here and Boston. About a hundred thousand population. The company is a fixture—been running for something over forty-five weeks. Two a day and no show Sunday. Salary, sixty dollars."

"I'd be ashamed to tell you what I'd do for sixty iron

men every Saturday night," Delmar spoke up, his eyes shining at the prospect. "But I say," he added swiftly, as if the idea had just dawned upon him, "what about yourself? How does it come you're offering me a job when you haven't one yourself?"

"Who said I hadn't a job?"

"Why, you as much as said so when you——"

"Are you going to get dressed and stop asking a lot of fool questions?" Klein broke in, half angrily. "I never opened my head about a job. But there's one for you, if you want it. The manager is at the Albany Hotel, and if you put up a good enough front you'll land the engagement. I got wind of it to-day, and——" He stopped short. "For the love of Patrick!" he exclaimed. "Are those your best clothes?"

"Best clothes?" Delmar gazed down upon the suit he had just put on. It was shabby, threadbare, and shiny. The pockets bulged; the coat hung in ripples, while the trousers gave one the impression of having been slept in. Buttons were missing here and there, grease spots were evident on the waistcoat, and the cuffs of the trousers were worn to a fringe.

"My best clothes?" Delmar repeated. "Dear me, no." He laughed, and then, with an assumed expression that might have been humorous at any other time, he said: "I have thirty trunks of them. Oh, yes. But unfortunately, dear old chap, my valet has gone out for the afternoon, and has taken the keys with him."

"Chop that line of character stuff," snapped Klein, "and talk sense! Are those your best clothes?"

"They are. Not only the best, but the worst and the only. What did you expect I'd be wearing?"

"Well, you'll never land a job in that scarecrow outfit," Klein announced. "You look like the horrible example of a rural drama. Take them off!"

"Take them off!" snorted Delmar. "Say, I'd make a hit asking for a job in a suit of pink underwear, wouldn't I?"

"Who said anything about pink underwear? You're forever picking up the wrong cues."

"Well, what am I to——"

Without a word Klein began removing his own clothes. Delmar watched until he had finished, and had donned the discarded bath robe.

"Now get into these clothes, and don't waste time apologizing," Klein said.

Delmar did so. In two minutes the change had been made.

"That's something like it," Klein said, turning the other around critically. "You look more like a human being now."

"It's a peach of a suit," remarked Delmar.

"Had it made about a month ago. Cost me seventy-five dollars, too. But it had to be. You've got to wear glad rags in this business even if you go hungry. Here"—Klein picked up his hat from the bed—"better put this on, too. Now, clear out."

"Who am I to see, and what am I to say?" asked Delmar, giving a final twist to his cravat, and tucking a clean handkerchief into the coat pocket.

"Go right to the Albany Hotel, and ask for Mr. Beyer. He is the manager of the company. That's all the tip I had. He's down here looking for people. Just impress him that you're a valuable stock actor, and that it is to his advantage to engage you. Don't be too anxious, but don't kick if the salary drops a few dollars. Remember this is May, and the White Way is jammed with actors out of work. August is a long way off, and you'll have to eat a few meals between now and time for fall rehearsals."

"Good enough. I follow you, Klein. I'll make this Mr. Beyer believe he can't do without me. Lord, what manager could resist this brown suit!" Delmar eyed himself critically in the broken mirror. "I look like a successful season with Mrs. Fiske—what?"

"Save your talk for the manager," admonished Klein.

Delmar laughed, put on the hat, accepted the cane Klein held out to him, and vanished out of the door.

"Don't forget to hurry back," was Klein's warning. "I want to go home before morning. Good-by and good luck!"

After Delmar had closed the door softly behind him, Klein settled himself in the one easy-chair, drawing it up under the flickering gas jet. Then, just as he had started looking through a magazine, Delmar returned on tiptoe, his face like a thundercloud.

"Just my infernal luck!" he groaned. "Mrs. Wold is in the lower hall."

"Who is Mrs. Wold?"

"She happens to be the high lord of decision at the present crisis," replied Delmar. "She's the landlady. If she catches sight of me in these fine togs—and me owing her a month's rent——"

Klein's eyes swept to the window. "You'll have to get out this way," he announced. "This is the top floor, isn't it? Well, take the fire escape to the roof, and go down on the other side of the house. It's dark now. You won't be seen."

"Say, you're a wonder, Klein," said Delmar admiringly. "I wouldn't have thought of that in a hundred years. We'll fool the old girl yet!"

He climbed out of the window, and, with the aid of the iron ladder, drew himself up to the roof. Klein waited until he had disappeared, then returned to his chair.

"Poor old Delmar!" he murmured sympathetically, allowing his eyes to make a more critical inspection of the dingy room and its shabby contents. "He's up against it bad. I only hope he lands the job."

He smiled reflectively. "And it was just the little engagement I wanted for myself—and needed, too. But I guess Delmar needs it more than I do, after all. I can find another one to-morrow—if I'm lucky."

He raised his feet to the window sill, leaned back in his chair, closed his eyes, and fell into a doze.

CHAPTER II.

DESTINY'S CLEW.

Klein awoke with a start, looked around the room, suddenly remembered where he was, yawned, and arose to his feet.

"Delmar ought to be home soon," he told himself, walking over to the table, upon which he had dumped the contents of his pockets. "Hello!" he exclaimed, rubbing his eyes, and holding his watch nearer. "Is this right? Jove, twelve o'clock!"

He stepped to the window, and peered out; everything was as quiet as a country churchyard at midnight. "Now, that's funny," he muttered to himself. "Delmar should

have been back long before this. The hotel is only two blocks from here."

Half an hour longer Klein waited, growing more and more impatient. Finally, convinced that the unexpected had happened to his friend, he decided to get into Delmar's old clothes, and venture out.

He dressed, chuckling to himself as he did so.

"Hope I'm not recognized in these togs," he remarked, catching his reflection in the mirror. "They're a travesty. And if Delmar doesn't put in an appearance before morning——" He broke off with a shrug. "Heaven help us both. That brown suit is the one decent outfit I possess."

Klein found an old cap of Delmar's, put it on, lowered the gas, listened for a moment at the door, then tiptoed out into the dark hall. Slowly, cautiously he ventured down the stairs, guided by the banister, for the only light was in the second-floor hall.

"Lord, how these stairs creak!" he muttered. "Hope I won't disturb any of the inmates of this boarding house."

He gained the last landing, where a single, putty-plugged gas jet struggled for life. Then, on the point of passing on to the final flight of stairs, thankful that his descent had been accomplished without any painful interference. Destiny, in the shape of the corpulent Mrs. Wold, suddenly confronted him.

She stepped out of a side room, and met him, face to face. Coming out of a brightly lighted room into a dim hall had apparently confused her for the moment, for, after starting back with an exclamation of surprise, she cried:

"Oh, Mr. Delmar! How you frightened me!"

But the next instant she must have realized her mistake—evidently the suit and cap had misled her in the first place, and, with something between a gurgle and a scream, she put out both of her arms as if to ward off an imaginary blow.

At the same time Klein, as much surprised at the meeting as the landlady, in attempting to make a dash for the last flight of stairs, tripped on the edge of the carpet, and fell squarely into the extended arms of Mrs. Wold. Instantly the landlady's vocal cords produced an outburst that would have shamed a screech owl.

Doors opened, footsteps clattered in all the halls; confused voices were raised. Frantically Klein struggled in the terrific embrace of Mrs. Wold, and, while her screams arose higher and higher, still she had presence of mind enough to keep him entangled.

Escape was no longer possible. Inmates of a dozen rooms, in all stages of deshabille, crowded the halls above him and below him. Everybody was trying to speak at once, and no one, with the exception of the two principals, seemed to know just what the trouble could be.

"Police!" finally gasped Mrs. Wold. "Some one call the police. I've caught a thief!"

Half a dozen women and two men crowded about them. Mrs. Wold still gripped Klein's arm.

"Police!" she kept repeating, between gasps. "I caught him in the hall. And he tried to beat me."

"Just allow me to explain," protested Klein, recovering his composure somewhat. "I'm no thief. I'm a friend of Mr. Delmar's, and we tried——"

"Hold him tight!" cried a woman from part way up the stairs. "He might try to kill you."

One of the men stepped forward. "I'll take care of this rascal, Mrs. Wold," he offered. "Don't worry, I won't let him get away."

"He's got on poor Mr. Delmar's clothes," some one added. "He's been stealing——"

"What have you got to say for yourself?" demanded the man who had relieved the landlady of her responsibility. "Come on, speak out!"

"I'm a friend of Mr. Delmar's," began Klein. "I've been in the house since eight o'clock. I gave him my suit to wear, and have been waiting for him to return. Something must have happened to him. He should have been back several hours ago. I was forced to put on this suit of his, and start for home."

"Mr. Delmar didn't go out to-night," spoke up Mrs. Wold. "I've been waiting for him."

Klein did not doubt this at all, yet he did not intend to enlighten the indignant landlady as to the method her resourceful roomer had taken in outwitting her.

"If you will go to his room you will find I have been telling the truth," protested Klein.

One of the women did so, at Mrs. Wold's request, and promptly returned with the information that Delmar was not in his room.

"I shouldn't be surprised," snapped Mr. Wold, "if you've murdered him and hidden his body. You look bad enough for anything." Her courage was returning swiftly now that she was amply protected. "Yes, sir, that's what he's went and done!" She turned to her breathless audience. "He tried to beat me, he did! Struck me! Me, a poor, defenseless woman! Yes, you did, you coward!"

She shook a mighty fist under his nose. "Just you wait until the police come!" She leaned over the stair rail, and called down: "Maggie! Have you phoned for the police?"

"Yes, Mrs. Wold, Ah done phoned," a small, frightened voice answered from the depths below.

Mrs. Wold turned to Klein again, half in tears. "Poor Mr. Delmar!" she moaned, wringing her fat hands. "He was a perfect gentleman, too. I always thought the world of him. He had such elegant manners! Such a lovely personality. Even if he did owe me a month's rent——"

Like the snuffing of a candle, the gas went out, and instantly the hall was plunged into darkness. A short, decisive struggle took place at Klein's side, although he was not a party to it. Then he felt an iron grip at his shoulder, whirl him half about, and propel him forward.

Mrs. Wold was screaming again, ably seconded by the other women. Then a voice at Klein's ear said sharply, commandingly:

"Run for it!"

A door must have closed behind him, for suddenly all the voices were hushed. Klein groped his way forward in the dark. Presently he discovered a door, and opened it cautiously. Ahead of him was a raised window. This he reached, swung over the sill, held to the iron ladder of the fire escape, descended to the foot of it, and dropped lightly to the ground.

CHAPTER III.

OVER THE PHONE.

To run across the small yard, now gloom-enveloped; climb the rear fence, and finally gain the narrow alley that led between houses to the opposite street, proved to be an easy achievement. Once out in the open, Klein

breathed freer; yet before he had covered half the block he imagined, not without a sudden quickening of his pulse, that a police whistle sounded. It lent wings to his heels.

Heading toward Bryant Park, he walked swiftly through it. Under the high arc lights and against the yellow glare of the big electric sign on Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, the classic bulk of the public library loomed up like some white fairyland palace.

"Of all the fool situations," Klein muttered, under his breath, as he hurried forward. "Never thought such things could happen except in a play. I'm lucky to get out of the house without being——"

He stopped, puzzling over the last unexpected but none the less welcomed incident in the hall. Who had turned out the gas? And why? It could not have been either of the men who had guarded him. Yet it was a man's voice who had commanded him to run.

"Lord, won't Delmar hear a great story when he returns!" said Klein to himself, chuckling at the thought.

In view of the situation he realized that his escape had been fortunate for all concerned. With the arrival of the police Mrs. Wold undqubtedly would have enlarged upon the story of the imaginary attack upon her. Klein's explanations would not have been given credence by the police, especially as he was wearing Delmar's clothes, and Delmar was not at hand to back up his statement. The outcome of the affair would have meant an uncomfortable night in the police station, and an endless amount of trouble, not alone for Klein, but for Delmar as well.

Just what had happened to Delmar after his disappearance over the roof of the boarding house was a mystery. Delmar was rather a wild sort of fellow at times, but it did not seem probable that he would deliberately remain away, knowing Klein was waiting for him.

In this unsettled frame of mind Klein reached his room, and was soon in bed. He awoke early, put on another suit, and hurried out to breakfast. That meal, in his present financial state, meant a certain basement restaurant on Forty-fifth Street, which to all theatrical folk, especially those who are hunting or "considering" engagements, is known as the "Saving Grace." It has a French name and a German proprietor, and one can enjoy the luxury of a five-course meal for twenty-five cents.

The big room, crowded with small tables, reeks with the theatrical atmosphere. Shop talk begins with the soup and continues through the entrée, the roast, and the other dishes, and does not end until the demi-tasse has been drained, and the precious quarter handed over to the smiling madame.

If the diner is content to listen instead of joining the White Light symphony, he will become imbued with the theatrical situation from the four-a-day vaudeville stars to the English actor who is at present "resting," and who refers to Frohman as "Charlie."

Klein found an unoccupied table in the corner of the room, from where he could keep an eye out for Delmar. Halfway through the meal a hand fell on Klein's shoulder, and looking up he beheld Maddern, an actor friend who had, only the day before, given him a tip on the Hudson Stock job.

"Hello, Klein," was his greeting, as he dropped into the opposite chair. "Keeping this chair for any one?"

"Take it. I guess Delmar isn't showing up this morning. Must have celebrated last night."

Maddern gave his order to the waitress. "I say, Klein, what luck did you have last night?"

"Didn't go after the job," Klein answered. "Sent a friend of mine. Don't know whether he landed it or not."

"What's the matter? Didn't it sound good to you?"

"Sound good?" Klein laughed. "Like milk and honey, old man. But at the last moment I met a friend who was down and out."

"I get you, Klein," interrupted the other, with a nod of his head. "You always were too tender-hearted. You know in this show business it's every man for himself, and the devil——"

"Some of us are more capable of bucking up against the devil than others, Maddern," said Klein quietly. "I've had a fair kind of season—about twenty-odd weeks, and managed to save a few dollars. But poor old Delmar—well, he has been on his uppers. He'd do the same for me if things were reversed."

"Surely he would," agreed Maddern. "But it's tough to hand a friend a job on a silver platter when you're counting the pennies yourself, isn't it? Klein, this is a rotten show year. Never heard of so many good pieces falling by the wayside. I'm signing with a picture company for the summer. As good money as stock, and not half the work. Why don't you tackle them, Klein?"

"I might," Klein said thoughtfully, "only I'm after a 'bit' with the new Belasco show. Rehearsals start in August. And you know he won't have a film actor for love or money."

Maddern shrugged. "Maybe you're right—but beggars can't be choosers. Even an actor must eat in the summer." He took a small cigar from a package of ten, and lighted it after handing one to Klein. "You were down to the Albany Hotel last night, weren't you?"

"I was not." Klein smiled at last night's recollections. "Why?"

"I could have sworn I saw you going up in the cage about—about eight o'clock. I thought, of course, you were going after the stock job. I hung around for a time, but as you didn't show up I went away."

"What made you think it was I?"

"Recognized that straw hat and a brown suit I've seen you wear."

"Oh!" and Klein laughed. "That was my friend—Delmar."

"But the suit? I'm sure it was yours. How did it happen he was wearing your suit?" Maddern insisted upon knowing.

"For purely business reasons," Klein answered. "He made up for the part of a prosperous actor willing to accept an engagement."

"And you?"

"I was sitting in his room wrapped in a faded bath robe."

A hearty laugh broke from Maddern. "You're a real, dyed-in-the-wool philanthropist, aren't you? I hope, after all your trouble, that your friend landed the engagement."

"I hope so, too," said Klein. "And I am also hoping for an early return of that brown suit. Delmar did not come back last night, so I had to borrow his old clothes in order to get home."

He was on the point of relating the adventure which had befallen him, but suddenly changed his mind.

"I suppose Delmar got the job, and went out to celebrate," Maddern suggested to Klein.

"I intend finding out very quickly. I can't look for engagements in the togs I have on."

The two left the restaurant, and walked over to Broadway. Here Maddern pleaded a previous engagement with his film company, and hurried off toward Forty-seventh Street.

"Good luck!" he called back over his shoulder. "Drop around and see me some time, won't you?"

Klein nodded, and walked down Broadway as far as Forty-first Street. At the corner he paused. Midway in the block was Delmar's boarding house. Should he go up and boldly ask to see him? Would Mrs. Wold listen to a calm explanation?

"Why shouldn't she?" he asked himself. "Delmar will back me up. Between us we can——"

He stopped before he had covered five yards. Suppose Delmar had not returned? In that case explanations would be useless. So he weighed the matter, finally concluding that the better method would be to telephone. If Delmar was in he would go up to the house. If not, then he would make inquiries at the Albany. The stock manager would tell him if Delmar had signed a contract.

Crossing the street, Klein went up the steps, and into the side door of the hotel. After thumbing the directory, he found Mrs. Wold's telephone number.

"Give me Bryant eight thousand, please," he told the girl at the desk. The connection was speedily made.

"Second booth for Bryant eight thousand," the operator announced.

Klein entered, but did not close the door.

"Hello! Is this Mrs. Wold's?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Will you call Mr. Delmar to the phone?"

"Mr. De—Delmar?" the voice on the other end broke into a stammer. "Why——why—he——" a confused murmur of other voices interrupted. Klein heard, quite distinctly, Mrs. Wold saying: "Let me talk with him, Maggie."

"Hello!" she said, after a pause. "What is it?"

"I want to speak with Mr. Delmar. Isn't he in?"

"Who is this speaking?"

"A friend." Klein was becoming annoyed.

"Why, they've taken him away," came the puzzling reply. "They took him away—just a few minutes ago."

"Took him away! What do you mean?"

"Haven't you heard?" Mrs. Wold's voice became shaky. "Mr. Delmar—is dead!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

TRANSPLANTING HUMAN HAIR.

In China human hair is actually transplanted, and those who engage in it find it a remunerative occupation. This hair-planting business owes its prosperity to a superstition. Chinese physiognomists say the eyebrows and whiskers of a man are just as essential in their relations to his success in life as his other qualifications. If his eyebrows are thin, or his whiskers are sickly, his luck will be thin and his health will be poor. Therefore, in order to stop the train of bad luck which nature has unfortunately ordained for him, he orders his eyebrows changed or replanted by a hair-planting professor.

This is done by first carefully pulling out the rebellious or unlucky hairs in the eyebrows. The next operation is to select a spot of hair on the neck of the patient or behind his ears that would suit for a fine eyebrow, and reduce the hairs down to the right length. A fine pair of sharp pincers is picked up with the left hand, and, selecting a suitable-sized hair, the operator jerks it out by the root, and with the right hand he quickly pierces a minute hole in the skin of the bald eyebrow in a slanting direction, and while the point of the needlelike instrument is still on the edge of the hole, the root of the pulled-up hair is carefully inserted.

But if the blood oozes out of it before the hair is planted, the hole will not be used on that day, for fear of inflammation, and not sufficient nutriment for the hair to take proper root. This operation is repeated until every hair in the eyebrows is replanted or enlarged. The patient usually experiences pain in the eyebrows for about twenty-four hours, after which he goes out and shows himself to his friends.

The professor charges more for planting eyebrows than for planting whiskers, because of the many varied degrees of slanting each hair in order to make the eyebrows look natural to the man, or to suit the ideas of the physiognomist.

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

Some new and interesting facts about the discovery of America are constantly coming to light. The most recent are furnished by a schoolboy, whose master directed him to write a short essay upon Christopher Columbus. The history of the finding of the new world has never been told in a more dramatic manner; and, as history, it is not much worse than some so-called historical novels:

"Clumbus was a man who could make an egg stand on end without breaking it. The King of Spain said to Clumbus:

"'Can you discover America?'

"'Yes,' said Clumbus, 'if you give me a ship.'

"So he had a ship, and sailed over the sea in the direction where he thought America ought to be found. The sailors quarreled, and they said they believed there was no such place. But after many days the pilot came to him and said:

"'Clumbus, I see land.'

"'Then that is America,' said Clumbus.

"When the ship got near, the land was full of black men. Clumbus said:

"'Is this America?'

"'Yes, it is,' said they.

"Then he said:

"'I suppose you are the niggers?'

"'Yes,' they said, 'we are.'

"The chief said:

"'I suppose you are Clumbus?'

"'You are right,' said he.

"Then the chief turned to his men and said:

"'There is no help for it; we are discovered at last.'"

AN IMPORTANT POST.

Store Boy—"Can't get off to-day. We're takin' an inventory of stock. Awful busy."

Chum—"Wot good are you in takin' inventories?"

Store Boy—"Good? I'm more important than the head bookkeeper. I wash the fly specks off of last year's goods.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Cartridges and Tobacco.

Several men have attempted smoking cartridges in their pipes, but none has gotten away with it. It's expensive. Pipes cost money and doctors' bills are disconcerting.

Milton Caskie, champion long-distance pipe smoker of Prairie Depot, Ohio, uses his coat pocket for a tobacco sack. Also he uses it in lieu of a cartridge belt. Unlike oil and water, tobacco and cartridges mix. Consequently it was not exactly a sweet, cool mixture that Caskie put into his pipe for his after-dinner smoke.

Caskie didn't notice anything unusual when he struck a match. However, he had a suspicion something was wrong when the match connected with the contents of his pipe.

He noticed that the stem of the pesky pipe shot down his throat and that the bowl wasn't anywhere in particular any more. Also he found it necessary to tell Andrew Brewer, who was forcibly sprinkled with flying bits of brier root, that the incident was unexpected and not in the least premeditated as a joke on his good friend Brewer. This story is "no pipe."

Underclothing Made of Paper.

The Japanese are now making and extensively wearing underclothing made of paper. The material is finely grained and has a number of remarkable qualities. It is very strong and at the same time very flexible, and, after being worn a few hours, it offers no more interference to perspiration than ordinary cotton clothing.

Swinging Stump a Toy.

A Christmas present to the cattle of the Wisconsin Agricultural College, at Madison, is called the first real animal toy in the world. A sixty-pound tree stump, supported in the air by a heavy chain so that it may swing like a pendulum, but in any direction, has been placed in a small pasture adjoining the dairy barn, for the pleasure of young and old bulls and cows that stand for hours in front of it, butting the stump with their heads and backs and raising it high in the air as a bull would lift a person when enraged.

Some New Inventions.

After a wild duck has been shot at several times it becomes suspicious. If it doubts the genuineness of ducks floating on the water, it will fly away. The latest kind of decoy is one which gives forth a lifelike quack at regular intervals and also swims around slowly. This is so cleverly done that it is said the wisest duck "falls for it." Both the "quack" and the propulsion of the dummy duck are operated by a clockwork motor inside the decoy.

To answer the demand for a cheap and serviceable sled for youngsters, one made of wire has recently been brought out. To make a sled of wood requires considerable material of rather high grade, and it must be painted and varnished, which adds to the cost. A sled made of wrought iron or steel is heavy, which is undesirable. The sled of wire offers lightness and economy, and is strong.

To insure the owner of a private shaving cup kept in a barber shop that he is the only user, there has been invented a paper cap to cover it, which cannot be removed without breaking a seal.

A Kansas man has invented a knife that will cut grapes four or five times as fast as the ordinary kind.

A griddle hinged in the center is a recent invention. It is so made that it may be turned over to bake a cake on both sides.

For the blind there has been invented a watch with the hours marked by raised dots and dashes, so that it can be read by the sense of touch.

"Capturing the Kaiser."

The Koelnische *Zeitung*, of Cologne, Germany, prints the following article regarding efforts made to capture the German emperor at the time of his reported trip to the eastern war fields:

"Emperor William is said to have paid a visit recently to the Austrian arena of war. The rumor spread among the Cossacks who were advancing in the vicinity of Lyck that the emperor was near that town, and they decided to capture him.

"It is related that a regular competition resulted among them at this hunt for the German emperor, and that one day a corporal of the Cossacks arrived at the Russian camp with a prisoner whom he designated as 'Wilhelm.' However, the corporal was sadly disappointed, for, although the prisoner showed a certain resemblance to the German emperor, he proved to be a lieutenant of the Uhlans. This semblance was in his mustache.

"The Cossack, however, would not be discouraged, and the following morning returned with two prisoners and exclaimed: 'I am positive that one of the two is Wilhelm.' The Russian army chiefs perceived that the unsuccessful hunt for the German emperor was likely to overthrow the whole Russian tactics and strategy and gave instructions that 'Wilhelm is not to be captured,' and thus the hunt for Wilhelm was abandoned."

Lives and Talks With Bullet in Brain.

Notwithstanding the fact that a thirty-two-caliber bullet is embedded in his brain, Gatano Vinsone, of Washington Avenue, Hackensack, N. J., is alive and conscious. The doctors attempted to probe for the bullet, but desisted finally because of the danger to the patient.

The remarkable feature of the case is that at no time since the shooting has Vinsone lost consciousness. He was shot by Vincenzo Itro, barber. Vinsone identified his assailant, but refused to tell why he had been shot.

Exchange for Harvest Help.

A coöperative organization to act as a clearing house for harvest hands was the result of a committee meeting in connection with a conference held at Kansas under the auspices of the United States Commission on Industrial Relations.

The organization will be known as the National Farmlabor Exchange, and is to be governed by representatives of the State employment and agricultural boards of Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Nebraska, North and

South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, and probably Wyoming.

Ultimately it is planned that the organization will be nation wide in its scope.

The organization will coöperate with the United States departments of agriculture and labor and with the Industrial Relations Commission. The legislatures of the various States will be asked to appropriate sufficient money to maintain representatives in Kansas City, Minneapolis, and Sioux City during the harvest season.

Charles McCaffree, commissioner of immigration of South Dakota, was named president of the organization.

Forbids Telling of Fortunes.

Fortune tellers now are forbidden to practice in any part of the German empire. Soon after the war broke out they began to do an enormous business with relatives of soldiers in the field, who wanted to know how things were going with them.

Visits to the fortune tellers often had tragic consequences, as many of the callers were in a high state of nervous tension.

The uncertainty of relatives regarding their menfolk at the front has been aggravated by the complete muddle of the field postal organization, which is being severely criticized by the newspapers.

Man's Confession a Fake.

Believing it will be a cold winter and having no desire to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, Howard Grant tried to break into jail at Janesville, Wis., by confessing the murder of Jennie Miller, of Aurora. Police officials of that city hurried to Janesville after receiving word Grant had confessed, but, after a severe cross-examination, Grant admitted he was lying and had not been near Aurora on the day of the crime.

He declared he was trying to get a warm jail to live in for the winter.

Walk 1,300 Miles for War.

A walk of 1,300 miles to the nearest railway station in order to report for military service—such was the recent jaunt of Fernand Tromeur, of Port Providence, on the Mackenzie River. Tromeur is one of twenty-five French reservists, mostly from the Yukon and Alaska, that left Montreal for New York, to sail on the steamer *Rochambeau* for Havre.

Plan to Restore Belgium.

Steps are being taken at The Hague to form an international committee, which will charge itself with the relief of the Belgians after the war and with the restoration of Belgian monuments, libraries, and other landmarks. The post of honorary president has been offered to Baron Fallon, the Belgian minister at The Hague.

Kansas Field Crop Yield Big.

The value of all live stock and field crops produced in Kansas in 1914 was $638,253,206, or $58,000,000 greater than in any other year, according to the report of J. C. Mohler, secretary of the State board of agriculture. The State's previous high record was made in 1912. The value of the field crops produced this year was placed at $289,971,925, or $52,000,000 in excess of the previous record.

Wheat, according to the report, leads all other crops, with a valuation of more than $151,000,000. The year's corn yield was valued at $59,000,000; oats, $17,000,000, and hay, $18,000,000.

Hunter Shoots White Deer.

One of the prizes shot during the recent hunting season was that of a white deer, killed near Ladysmith, Sawyer County, Wis. A man bought it for $200, his purpose being to give it into the hands of a taxidermist for mounting. It will, if properly mounted, be worth $600 to $800.

The extra value of the white deer is due to the fact that it is exceptionally rare. It is a freak animal. One was shot in Wisconsin about twenty years ago and one about eight years ago. Beside the one shot recently there was but one other white deer known to exist.

It is also stated that there is a jet-black deer of huge proportions stalking through the Wisconsin woods. That sort of deer also is a freak, and would be worth a considerable sum if captured.

Badly Stung by Angry Bees.

While Arthur Cooper, of Sabetha, Kan., was hauling a hive of bees in his automobile, the top was knocked off the hive and the infuriated insects chased him a distance of several miles. He finally had to abandon the auto and run through the brush along the roadside to escape them, after being stung hundreds of times.

Homemade Furnace Cost $2.50.

Emilio Prebianca, who lives in Canton, Ill., is thrifty and ingenious. He has been in America several years and some time ago bought a four-room house. It has no basement, and he proceeded to dig one, and cemented the floor and the walls, dividing the room into two parts. Then he decided there should be a furnace. Buying $2.50 worth of sheet iron, he started to build his own heating system, and succeeded. The furnace is constructed with the fire box below and a hot-air chamber above. From the latter two sets of pipes, made from ordinary rain spouting, conduct the heat to the upper rooms, and all is warm and cozy as a bug in a rug.

But Emilio did not stop there. The hot-air chamber, he saw, could be put to good use as an oven, and the family bread baked therein. Of course, the odor of the baking penetrates through the pipes to the living room, but what of that? It's a good, wholesome fragrance, and Emilio and his good wife should worry.

Win Big Land Suit.

After twenty years of litigation in the Federal and State courts, the supreme court of the United States has rendered a decision in favor of the Babcock Lumber & Land Company, of Pittsburgh, Pa., giving that corporation full title to 10,000 acres of the finest timber land in Tennessee and North Carolina, said to be worth about $500,000.

Incidentally, in the course of the trying of this case and other suits that resulted from it, the boundary line between the States of North Carolina and Tennessee was established, and although this boundary line was the same as that placed on the many maps circulated between 1821 and the time of the decision, nothing of a docu-

mentary nature to prove its correctness existed during that time.

In 1821 the question of the boundary line dividing the two States was brought to the attention of the governors of the commonwealths. A survey was made, a map was drawn, and field notes were written. What became of these nobody had any idea until a few years ago, when the map was found in an ash barrel in the cellar of the State House in Nashville, and shortly afterward the notes were found in an old desk, where they had remained hidden eighty years. The suit was decided on these records.

Talks One Hundred Miles by Wireless.

For many years F. H. Miller, who is experimental engineer of the Union Pacific Railroad, has been working on wireless-telephone apparatus for direct communication with moving trains. He announces that his plans have been completed and a satisfactory system has been developed whereby he is able to talk with men on a moving train one hundred miles away from the wireless transmitting station.

Kansas Boy's Corn Record.

One hundred and sixteen bushels of corn raised from an acre of ground is the record corn yield of Kansas this season. It was raised by William James, a fifteen-year-old youth, who lives near here. He planted the seed April 15th, and plowed it seven times.

Gold found in Illinois.

Gold has been discovered in the State of Illinois, according to the mining department of the University of Illinois, which completed a test of sample ore brought to the institution.

The ore is from Crawford County, in Southeastern Illinois, and was taken from a hill alongside a stream. The ore was pronounced to be of a very high grade, but, as the sample was small, a more comprehensive test is to be made in the near future. Gold has been discovered before in the State, but has been considered a glacial deposit.

Returned-letter Mystery.

The return recently to Charles Boyst, of Wilmington, N. C., of a letter bearing his address in the corner, and which he mailed ten years ago, supplies a mystery that will be hard to ferret out.

Boyst mailed the letter to an individual at White Oak, N. C., just sixty miles from Wilmington, January 2, 1904, and the postmark shows the hour to have been seven-thirty a. m. Nothing further was heard from the letter until one day this week the sender found it in his post-office box, bearing the newly penciled words: "Return to sender." No marks are shown on the envelope as an index as to where it has spent the last ten years.

Judge Defends Missouri Mule.

The ears of the Missouri mule, which have been lying back in doubt and distemper for four years, are justified in rising good-humoredly, for Judge Henry Lamm has exonerated the entire bone-headed, back-booting family.

He declared, in a decision, that the whole mule family could not be blamed for one wild and unruly member, and incidentally banished the hopes of B. L. Lyman, of Jefferson City, Mo., for a five-dollar reward in a very old case.

The case concerns the action of a mule, Ginger by name, which reduced a light buggy and a wagon, which offended its senses, to splinters.

In freeing the Missouri mule from the stigma resulting from the mental attitude of Ginger, Judge Lamm said:

"There are sporadic instances of mules behaving badly. That one that Absalom rode and that went from under him at a critical time in his fate, for instance. 'The mule didn't kick according to no rule,' saith the American negro. However, the faithfulness, sure-footedness, and good sense of the mule, all matters of common knowledge, may be allowed to stand over against his faults and create a preponderance in his favor."

New Transatlantic Air Boat.

Another transatlantic flying boat is to be built at Hammondsport, N. Y., for Rodman Wanamaker. It will be remembered that Wanamaker had the big flying boat *America* built last summer for a flight from Newfoundland to England. The war caused the abandonment of the plan, and the *America* was sold to the British navy. The new boat will probably be ready early next summer. It will be the largest over-water machine ever made.

Big Oil Well Struck.

A well spouting 44,000 feet of gas a day has been drilled in near Sissonville, W. Va., and oil and gas men of the State are flocking to the section and leasing up all available territory. The well is the largest ever struck in West Virginia. The roar of the gas can be heard two miles. Oil operators say the gas well indicates rich oil deposits in that section.

Legless Saved in Sea Fight.

Among the many stories published in Berlin, Germany, about incidents which followed some of the recent naval disasters is one telling of the rescue of a member of the crew of the cruiser *Hela*. The sailor, whose name is Kuettner, lost both legs in an explosion shortly before the vessel sank.

One of his comrades, Limpert by name, although himself struggling with the terrific onrush of the waves, tied the crippled man to a board and kept him above the surface, swimming for more than an hour, until the two were picked up by a torpedo boat. Limpert was promptly promoted and received a communication from the admiralty praising him for his heroism.

Lightest Wood That Grows.

The lightest wood that grows is that from a tree indigenous to southeastern Missouri. It is known there as the cork tree, but its wood is lighter than cork. The tree grows to a height of fifteen feet, and a diameter of six inches. The roots are lighter that the wood. This Missouri cork wood has no particular commercial value. The fishermen use it to make floats for their nets. The heaviest-known wood is also a native of the United States, the black iron wood of Florida.

Life Jobs on a Farm.

A farm for the benefit of unskilled workmen thrown out of employment by the completion of the Panama Canal has been established by the government in the Canal Zone. There are now about one hundred men on this farm, all

of whom are earning a comfortable living for themselves. Nearly all these farmers are crippled, some having lost an arm or a leg or having been incapacitated in some other way for hard work. The farm grows bananas, oranges, coconuts, and other tropical products, and is stocked with cows, chickens, ducks, and pigs. It is managed by the medical corps of the United States army. Each workman is to have a life job on the farm.

Eagle Killed in Louisiana.

B. M. Benford, a farmer living near Louter, La., recently killed the first eagle that has been seen in north Louisiana in several years. The first that was known of the eagle was when it killed a young calf for Mr. Benford, and he succeeded in killing it next day. It created considerable excitement because it has been so long since an eagle has been seen in that part of the country. It measured 8 feet 5 inches from tip to tip. Some say it was a bald eagle; others claim it was a golden eagle.

Fugitive Six Years Returns Minus Legs.

A fugitive from justice for over six years, during which time he had been caught in a Canadian Northwest blizzard and had both legs frozen off, Charles Fox, wanted by the authorities of Jackson prison for violating his parole in 1908, gave himself up to Sheriff Franz, at St. Joseph, Mich., and asked to be taken back to the penitentiary. Fox told the officers that his stricken conscience told him to surrender.

"I haven't been hounded by the law for a long time," he said, "but my conscience has been hounding me ever since I violated my parole and fled to Canada. The more I wandered about, helpless and penniless, the more it bothered me, so I traveled to St. Joseph, five hundred miles, to get the load off my mind. I'll be glad to get back to Jackson and serve out my time."

Fox was sentenced from Berrien County in 1906 for a ten-year term for arson. He confessed to "firing" several buildings in this city and Benton Harbor.

Blast Kills Seven in Cleveland.

A natural-gas explosion in a two-story apartment house at 11616 Madison Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, killed seven persons, seriously injured nine, hurt twelve less seriously, and wrecked the building. Police are searching the ruins for the bodies of seven others who are missing.

Girl and Father Both Elope.

Albert Shober, widower, with seven children, and Mrs. Cora Martin, widow, with eight children, and James Lee Keech and Miss Bertha Shober, all of Cumberland, Md., were the principals in a double wedding in Baltimore. Mrs. Keech is a daughter of Shober.

The younger couple planned to elope, and when they boarded the train they found Shober and Mrs. Martin. Plans were kept secret until Baltimore was reached, when all confessed, and the double wedding took place in the Baltimore Cathedral. Both couples returned to Cumberland to reside.

Lynching Prevented by Judges' Oratory.

A mob of two hundred armed men, that stormed a jail bent on lynching one of the inmates, was dispersed by the reasoning and oratory of two court judges: Circuit Judge R. T. T. Layton and County Judge D. W. Ryder. However, the mob, which dispersed without carrying out its purpose, is not permanently quieted.

Turner Graham, his son, Turner, his wife, and Roy and Dee Leek are in jail at Elizabethtown, Ky., charged with complicity in the shooting of Sheriff R. T. McMurtry when McMurtry was leading a posse to arrest young Graham and Roy Leek for the murder of James Woods, at Upton.

A mob of two hundred armed men gathered at the jail, bent on lynching, when Judge Layton and Judge Ryder pleaded with them for an hour. The crowd dispersed, but McMurtry is believed dying, and another attack is feared.

Want to Feed Americans First.

"Quick action must be taken by every American to stop this flood of food and money to Europe. Despite our prosperity, conditions have been brought about by the war which have driven the unemployed in the cities to desperation. We must feed our own poor before we aid the victims of the war."

Mrs. Nellie B. van Slingerland, of New York, founder of the Black Cross Society, made this statement in outlining plans of the Black Cross to head off the shipments of American wealth to Belgium and other countries in the war zone.

The organization of the Black Cross Society will be perfected at a meeting this week. Scores of prominent New York people have joined the movement. The movement started when Germany taxed Belgium $7,000,000 on the same day that American ships unloaded in that country several millions of dollars' worth of food and clothing. The promoters of the society declare that by feeding the Belgians, America is supplying German soldiers with ammunition.

Woman Gets $100 a Bite.

When Mrs. Amelia Bergunnzi, of Columbus, Ohio, was bitten by a certain yellow dog, she became pretty much peeved. When she was bitten by the same dog a year later, she became somewhat vexed. When she was bitten by the same dog a third time, she got downright mad; so she sued Joseph Russo, who owns the dog, for $2,000, and has just been given judgment for $300, a hundred for each bite.

Mrs. Bergunnzi operates a hurdy-gurdy wagon, and it is thought the yellow dog objects to so much ragtime disturbance and longs for something more soothing, like "Silver Threads," Mendelssohn's "Spring Song," or "Heart Bowed Down."

His Past Life a Mystery.

The lamentable plight of a man now employed in Dallas, Texas, as described from week to week by his sympathizing friends, furnishes a story like something a reader may encounter in novel and play, but is seldom observed in actual life. The unfortunate man gives his name as Alfred F. Lawrence, but he doubts if that is his true name. He has to have a name, he argues, therefore he selected this one, as will be explained later. His story is a weird one of a memory blotted out, but which, if it could be revived, would no doubt prove the man to be from higher walks of life than those pursued by the average mechanic.

Lawrence, as he is called, works at the tailoring trade, which he has followed for three or four years. It is not his profession, however, but a livelihood. He is an artist

and a musician, capable in both to a high degree. He is well educated and believes that back of a period of utter darkness there lies a history of his life in entirely different surroundings from those at the present time.

Four or five years ago Lawrence knows that he was once a well and sound man, but an accident shattered his mind and memory. The only physical trace of it is a blue spot on his head, and a small hole in his skull that tells of a serious fracture at some time. To this the man attributes the loss of his mind and all of his past life.

Lawrence has only recently learned how to talk, and cannot recall anything at all of the past. When sitting alone, and his mind at ease, flashes of light play through his mind and give him a flash of insight to his past life. He immediately tells his friends, and they make a note of it. Thus he has gathered a brief history of his life since the accident occurred.

He remembers at times that the accident dates back to a time when he was a patient in a hospital at Los Angeles or San Francisco. He remembered that Mayor Alexander called at the hospital to see him. After getting out of the hospital he could neither talk nor write, and his mind was that of a child. Lawrence—he got his name from a slip of paper that was found in his coat at the time this occurred—left California and came through the Southwest to Texas. He lived at Houston for a short while, and several weeks ago came to Dallas.

Lawrence is a musician of undoubted ability, and paints so well that his works have brought him goodly sums of money at different times and places.

Physicians say that he can be cured by an operation, but he does not want to undertake it until he has found some of his relatives and established his past in a natural way. He fears that an operation might produce fatal results, and he has a horror of dying without regaining his lost memory. However, physicians have assured him the operation could be performed without any danger.

Efforts are being made by the people that he knows here and at other places he has been lately to discover a way to locate the man's relatives.

Held Same Office Sixty-four Years.

John Laws, of Hillsboro, N. C., who died recently at the age of ninety-four years, is believed to have held the State record for continuous holding of an office at the hands of the vote of the people, having been register of deeds of Orange County for the past sixty-four years continuously.

Orange County was formed in 1850, and Laws was the first man elected to the office of register of deeds. The term of office is two years, and for thirty-two consecutive elections he has been elected to the office, and is the only man who ever held the office in this county.

Laws was married twice, the second time at the age of eighty-six, and leaves a wife and three children from the second marriage.

To Keep on Setting Type.

Gilman Nordhongen, of Marcus, Ia., who is reported to have fallen heir to $200,000, is a linotype operator and an all-around printer and is employed in the Marcus *News* office. When shown a Grand Forks, N. D., dispatch stating that he was heir to $200,000, he said:

"I was born in North Dakota, and my father died at Palermo, N. D., seven years ago. He was an inventor, but do not know how much he made on his rotary snow plow. I have two sisters living in Fargo, one in Vanguard, Saskatchewan, Canada. I like the smell of printer's ink and expect to keep on sticking type till I see the money."

Demands New Trial.

Helen Elliott, a negress, of Hattiesburg, Miss., convicted of retailing liquor unlawfully, has asked that the verdict be set aside and a new trial granted, on the ground that while the jury was considering her case, it attended en masse the Andrews' revival tent meetings and "got religion," then promptly found her guilty. She sets forth that the revival sermon theme was "Wine is a mocker and strong drink is raging."

Mars' Head Like a Rock.

That "Knock-out" Mars, of Cincinnati, has a tough head was discovered by Ritchie Mitchell in his fight recently. Mitchell's arm was hurt in the battle, and now he has discovered that he broke one of the small bones by too vigorous contact with Mars' dome. Mitchell will have to call off all battles for the next month.

Baby's Pet is a Leopard.

Four-year-old Dorothy Webb, of Atlanta, Ga., plays every day with Snookums, a baby leopard, and the pair have the finest time imaginable. They were not always so, for it was a long time before Dorothy's father, who has charge of the commissary department of a circus, sanctioned this odd fellowship.

When the show was in winter quarters, little Dorothy had, as a playmate, a roly-poly sort of a puppy, which strayed away from the camp and was lost.

One day last spring Dorothy was missed from her usual playgrounds. The youngster had toddled to the animal house where mother leopard had just given birth to two cubs. Dorothy had reached through the cage and was petting one of the baby leopards when her mother appeared.

Nothing would satisfy the girl but the leopard cub, so it was arranged to have Dorothy spend several hours each day at the cage, until the leopardess made no objection to the baby carrying the cub about.

Cat Steals Money for Bed.

The fifty dollars in small bills which Patrick J. Cavanaugh had long concealed in a small box under the bed in his home at Avenue A and First Street, Bayonne, N. J., disappeared a few days ago, and he was worried. He was about to call in the police, when he found the family cat with a litter of kittens. She had borrowed the money to make a comfortable bed for her little ones.

$50,000 if Wedded in Year.

If seventeen-year-old Sarah Somer, of New York, becomes the bride of Doctor Isidore Apfelberg by Christmas of this year, they will have a half interest, valued at $50,000, in a six-story tenement building.

Miss Somer is the daughter of Wolf Somer, owner of a restaurant, and she is very pretty. Her father makes this explanation:

"While my daughter is now too young to be married, I do not believe in long engagements. I believe that a year

is long enough for a young pair to find out if they are suitable to each other, and I believe that people ought to marry while they are young.

"To make certain this would not be a long engagement, I have deeded a half interest in that tenement to them if they are married before Christmas."

Breaks His Leg Fourth Time.

Dreaming that his home was about to be flooded, and attempting to flee to a place of safety, W. C. von Stein, of Findlay, Ohio, broke his leg for the fourth time in a few weeks.

Von Stein, who is seventy-four, broke the same leg several weeks ago while attempting to crate a calf, and he was in bed when he broke it the fourth time. He was seized with the hallucination that the water was pouring into his dwelling.

He made a vigorous effort to avoid the deluge and struck his broken leg against the bed with sufficient force to break it.

A Carbolic Highball Victim.

J. C. Martin is dead, at Greenville, S. C., as the result of drinking a carbolic-acid highball. Mrs. Martin, for years accustomed to mixing her husband a toddy each night, got the whisky and carbolic-acid bottles mixed, and she served her husband a mixture of acid and fizz water instead of whisky. Mr. Martin drank the mixture, and, after suffering tortures for two hours, died.

The coroner made an investigation of the affair and decided that an inquest was not necessary, as there was abundant evidence to show that Mrs. Martin was ignorant of the nature of the drink she served her husband. Mrs. Martin is left with three children.

Hawk Would Not be a Pet.

Doctor Heptig took Joe Lindsay, Frank Dorel, and Ed Davis, of Horton, Ky., out on a hunting trip, and, coming home, Davis shot a hawk, crippling one wing so the bird couldn't fly. He brought it to town with the idea of making a pet out of it, but the hawk thought different.

It chewed up everything it could reach in Luebbe's drug store, and when Ed took it out in the street, it chased him half a block. The bird had a five-foot stretch of wing, and was so wild and fierce it had to be killed.

Cows Painted Like Zebras.

Criminal warrants are expected to follow the death of five cows, at Grand Rapids, Mich. The animals were found covered with stripes of many colors; the result of a sign painter's effort to make them resemble zebras. The bovines licked the stripes, and enough poison was taken into their systems to cause death.

Milwaukee Poor Must Wait.

Milwaukee has given so much to German orphans and the Belgians that little is left for the starving poor there. The mayor has issued a public appeal, declaring the need at home is great.

Fate of a Proud Old Ship.

The once proud old frigate *Independence*, in her time the most powerful warship in the United States navy, is serving out her last days as an ignominious coal barge. The fire-engine horse, worn out in honorable service, is no longer compelled by enlightened communities to spend his declining years in the shafts of an ashcart, but is made an honoroble pensioner in some grassy meadow, where the clang of the midnight alarm no longer disturbs his rest. A ship, a battleship, a seventy-four-gun frigate, America's first fleet flagship, the *Independence*, is perhaps not as human as an animal.

It had been intended that the *Independence* should be one of the chief exhibits at the San Francisco Exposition, docked beside the latest and most modern of superdreadnaughts, but a consideration of $3,515 changed the plans. She was sold. Her bulkheads have been knocked out, and she will carry coal on the Pacific coast until a merciful gale sends her at last to rest. The *Independence* was built at Boston just one hundred years ago this year.

Cows Start Lively Battle.

An American in the French army, writing under date of December 6th, says:

"We have been in new trenches now for five days. During the march there we crossed fields where the artillery fire must have been terrible. I counted nineteen holes in a four-acre space and counted a hundred that we passed over in marching a mile.

"Private Hall—W. H. Hall, of Bowling Green, Ky.—has the mumps.

Corporals Morlac (Edward Morlac), Thaw (William Thaw, of Pittsburgh, Hall-Bach (J. J. Bach, of New York, and Trinkard (C. Trinkard, of New York), were doing sentry duty in front of the trenches, when some cows came along. In the darkness Morlac crept out with his revolver in his hand to investigate. Firing began, and the *petit poste*—sentry squad—returned the fire, thinking the Germans were arriving with the cows as cover. Another section began firing, thinking the cows were an advancing enemy. The boys slowly made their way back to the lines, unhurt, but it was a close call.

Another Baby by Parcel Post.

Simon Slize, a tailor, of Boulder, Colo., has received a notice that his son, nineteen months old, whom he left in Indianapolis, Ind., when he was on the way to Boulder to New York several months ago, will be sent to him by parcel post by the Jewish Relief Association, of Indianapolis, in whose charge the infant was left by Slize. The postal authorities say the baby will be relayed through several stations because of the regulation limiting the shipment of live persons or animals to twenty miles.

Great Athletic Book 10c

Be strong and athletic. Learn wrestling, self defense, jiu-jitsu. Let Farmer Burns, Mgr. Frank Gotch, World's Champion, teach you. Great opportunity for young men. Makes you strong, healthy and skillful.

Send 10c for 32-page book showing great holds and tricks by Burns and Gotch. Only a few at this price. Write today, giving your age.

Farmer Burns School of Wrestling, 2342 Ramge Bldg., Omaha, Neb.

GREENBACKS!

Pack of $1,000 Stage Bills, 10c; 3 packs 25c. Send for a pack and show the boys what a WAD you carry. C. A. NICHOLS, Jr., BOX 59, CHILI, N. Y.

CACHOO! MAKE the whole family and all your friends "just sneeze their heads off" without knowing why, with CACHOO, the new long distance harmless snuff. Sent anywhere for 10c. 3 for 25c.
C. A. NICHOLS, Jr., Box 59, CHILI, N. Y.

The Nick Carter Stories

ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY BEAUTIFUL COLORED COVERS

When it comes to detective stories worth while, the **Nick Carter Stories** contain the only ones that should be considered. They are not overdrawn tales of bloodshed. They rather show the working of one of the finest minds ever conceived by a writer. The name of Nick Carter is familiar all over the world, for the stories of his adventures may be read in twenty languages. No other stories have withstood the severe test of time so well as those contained in the **Nick Carter Stories.** It proves conclusively that they are the best. We give herewith a list of some of the back numbers in print. You can have your news dealer order them, or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage stamps.

696—A Pupil of Doctor Quartz.
697—The Midnight Visitor.
698—The Master Crook's Match.
699—The Man Who Vanished.
700—The Garnet Gauntlet.
701—The Silver Hair Mystery.
702—The Cloak of Guilt.
703—A Battle for a Million.
704—Written in Red.
707—Rogues of the Air.
709—The Bolt from the Blue.
710—The Stockbridge Affair.
711—A Secret from the Past.
712—Playing the Last Hand.
713—A Slick Article.
714—The Taxicab Riddle.
715—The Knife Thrower.
717—The Master Rogue's Alibi.
719—The Dead Letter.
720—The Allerton Millions.
728—The Mummy's Head.
729—The Statue Clue.
730—The Torn Card.
731—Under Desperation's Spur.
732—The Connecting Link.
33—The Abduction Syndicate.
36—The Toils of a Siren.
737—The Mark of a Circle.
738—A Plot Within a Plot.
739—The Dead Accomplice.
741—The Green Scarab.
743—A Shot in the Dark.
746—The Secret Entrance.
747—The Cavern Mystery.
748—The Disappearing Fortune.
749—A Voice from the Past.
752—The Spider's Web.
753—The Man With a Crutch.
754—The Rajah's Regalia.
755—Saved from Death.
756—The Man Inside.
757—Out for Vengeance.
758—The Poisons of Exili.
759—The Antique Vial.
760—The House of Slumber.
761—A Double Identity.
762—"The Mocker's" Stratagem.
763—The Man that Came Back.
764—The Tracks in the Snow.
765—The Babbington Case.
766—The Masters of Millions.
767—The Blue Stain.
768—The Lost Clew.
770—The Turn of a Card.
771—A Message in the Dust.
772—A Royal Flush.
774—The Great Buddha Beryl.
775—The Vanishing Heiress.
776—The Unfinished Letter.
777—A Difficult Trail.
778—A Six-word Puzzle.
782—A Woman's Stratagem.
783—The Cliff Castle Affair.
784—A Prisoner of the Tomb.
785—A Resourceful Foe.
786—The Heir of Dr. Quartz.
787—Dr. Quartz, the Second.
789—The Great Hotel Tragedies.
790—Zanoni, the Witch.
791—A Vengeful Sorceress.
794—Doctor Quartz's Last Play.
795—Zanoni, the Transfigured.
796—The Lure of Gold.
797—The Man With a Chest.
798—A Shadowed Life.
799—The Secret Agent.
800—A Plot for a Crown.
801—The Red Button.
802—Up Against It.
803—The Gold Certificate.
804—Jack Wise's Hurry Call.
805—Nick Carter's Ocean Chase.
806—Nick Carter and the Broken Dagger.
807—Nick Carter's Advertisement.
808—The Kregoff Necklace.
809—The Footprints on the Rug.
810—The Copper Cylinder.
811—Nick Carter and the Nihilists.
812—Nick Carter and the Convict Gang.
813—Nick Carter and the Guilty Governor.
814—The Triangled Coin.
815—Ninety-nine—and One.
816—Coin Number 77.
817—In the Canadian Wilds.
818—The Niagara Smugglers.
819—The Man Hunt.

NEW SERIES

NICK CARTER STORIES

1—The Man from Nowhere.
2—The Face at the Window.
3—A Fight for a Million.
4—Nick Carter's Land Office.
5—Nick Carter and the Professor.
6—Nick Carter as a Mill Hand.
7—A Single Clew.
8—The Emerald Snake.
9—The Currie Outfit.
10—Nick Carter and the Kidnaped Heiress.
11—Nick Carter Strikes Oil.
12—Nick Carter's Hunt for a Treasure.
13—A Mystery of the Highway.
14—The Silent Passenger.
15—Jack Dreen's Secret.
16—Nick Carter's Pipe Line Case.
17—Nick Carter and the Gold Thieves.
18—Nick Carter's Auto Chase.
19—The Corrigan Inheritance.
20—The Keen Eye of Denton.
21—The Spider's Parlor.
22—Nick Carter's Quick Guess.
23—Nick Carter and the Murderess.
24—Nick Carter and the Pay Car.
25—The Stolen Antique.
26—The Crook League.
27—An English Cracksman.
28—Nick Carter's Still Hunt.
29—Nick Carter's Electric Shock.
30—Nick Carter and the Stolen Duchess.
31—The Purple Spot.
32—The Stolen Groom.
33—The Inverted Cross.
34—Nick Carter and Keno McCall.
35—Nick Carter's Death Trap.
36—Nick Carter's Siamese Puzzle.
37—The Man Outside.
38—The Death Chamber.
39—The Wind and the Wire.
40—Nick Carter's Three Cornered Chase.
41—Dazaar, the Arch-Fiend.
42—The Queen of the Seven.
43—Crossed Wires.
44—A Crimson Clew.
45—The Third Man.
46—The Sign of the Dagger.
47—The Devil Worshipers.
48—The Cross of Daggers.
49—At Risk of Life.
50—The Deeper Game.
51—The Code Message.
52—The Last of the Seven.
53—Ten-Ichi, the Wonderful.
54—The Secret Order of Associated Crooks.
55—The Golden Hair Clew.
56—Back From the Dead.
57—Through Dark Ways.
58—When Aces Were Trumps.
59—The Gambler's Last Hand.
60—The Murder at Linden Fells.
61—A Game for Millions.
62—Under Cover.
63—The Last Call.
64—Mercedes Danton's Double.
65—The Millionaire's Nemesis.
66—A Princess of the Underworld.
67—The Crook's Blind.
68—The Fatal Hour.
69—Blood Money.
70—A Queen of Her Kind.
71—Isabel Benton's Trump Card.
72—A Princess of Hades.
73—A Prince of Plotters.
74—The Crook's Double.
75—For Life and Honor.
76—A Compact With Dazaar.
77—In the Shadow of Dazaar.
78—The Crime of a Money King.
79—Birds of Prey.
80—The Unknown Dead.
81—The Severed Hand.
82—The Terrible Game of Millions.
83—A Dead Man's Power.
84—The Secrets of an Old House.
85—The Wolf Within.
86—The Yellow Coupon.
87—In the Toils.
88—The Stolen Radium.
89—A Crime in Paradise.
90—Behind Prison Bars.
91—The Blind Man's Daughter.
92—On the Brink of Ruin.
93—Letter of Fire.
94—The $100,000 Kiss.
95—Outlaws of the Militia.
96—The Opium-Runners.
97—In Record Time.
98—The Wag-Nuk Clew.
99—The Middle Link.
100—The Crystal Maze.
101—A New Serpent in Eden.
102—The Auburn Sensation.
103—A Dying Chance.
104—The Gargoni Girdle.
105—Twice in Jeopardy.
106—The Ghost Launch.
107—Up in the Air.
108—The Girl Prisoner.
109—The Red Plague.
110—The Arson Trust.
111—The King of the Firebugs.
112—"Lifter's" of the Lofts.
113—French Jimmie and His Forty Thieves.
114—The Death Plot.
115—The Evil Formula.
116—The Blue Button.
117—The Deadly Parallel.
118—The Vivisectionists.
119—The Stolen Brain.
120—An Uncanny Revenge. Dated January 2, 1915.
121—The Call of Death. Dated January 9, 1915.
122—The Suicide. Dated January 16, 1915.
123—Half a Million Ransom. Dated January 23, 1915.
124—The Girl Kidnaper.

PRICE, FIVE CENTS PER COPY. If you want any back numbers of our weeklies and cannot procure them from your news dealer, they can be obtained direct from this office. Postage stamps taken the same as money.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79-89 Seventh Ave., NEW YORK CITY